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Local pg 3

Deficit budget introduced

Local pg 4

Seal hunt rally during Games

Riding the Recession

Looking for ways to save money and ride out the economic storm? For the next six weeks, Metro will share advice on how to cut down on expenses and navigate your way through the recession.

Workology

- **How to avoid household tensions in the era of pink slips, pg 14**

Travel

- **How 'recession chic' and bargains are replacing hedonism in the world of travel, pg 19**

This week

- **Food — Local meals for a steal**
- **Style — Looking on the bright side of fashion during New York Fashion Week**

Another dead, 1 hurt in daylight shooting

KRISTEN THOMPSON/METRO VANCOUVER

Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson answers questions at the scene of a shooting near Fraser Street and 53rd Avenue yesterday.

KRISTEN THOMPSON
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The gun violence in the Lower Mainland shows no signs of abating with another daylight shooting leaving one man dead and another injured in South Vancouver.

Nazreen Dean said her teenage brothers were watching TV in their home near Fraser Street and 53rd Avenue yesterday afternoon when two men banged on the door looking for someone named Azim.

"We are convinced we don't know those guys," Dean said, adding her brother told the men no one by that name lived there.

It's unclear at what point her 19-year-old brother, Aleem Mohammed was shot and injured. Dean said that her other brother, Amir Mohammed, chased the gunmen and wrestled with one of the men. That assailant wound up dead and Amir was taken away in handcuffs.

The second suspect ran away.

Nakib Ahmed has lived in the neighbourhood for six years and said it was "surreal" to come home and see the street blocked off with police tape.

"I have a five-year-old," he said. "This is unimaginable. This is a residential area. Every couple blocks, churches and schools."

Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson joined police at the scene and said he's "horrified" by the violence.

"We are hundreds and hundreds of officers short of what the other big cities in Canada have to combat gang crime," Robertson said.

"How many killings does it take for us to deal with gang killings as a metro police force?"

Bal Kaur, a legal assistant who organized an anti-gang task force last year, happened upon the scene as she was driving by.

"You can't keep blaming the government (for the violence)," she said. "It's about parents taking accountability and opening their eyes. You can't walk around with blinders on."

Killed mom was connected to gangs

SURREY Police have identified the woman killed in a drive-by shooting in Surrey on Monday as 23-year-old Nicole Marie Alemy from White Rock.

Alemy was shot three times while driving her husband's Cadillac down 148th Street at around 10:30 a.m.

Her four-year-old son was in the back seat at the time but wasn't hurt.

The Integrated Homicide Investigation Team said the boy is being kept in the care of the province for his own safety.

According to media reports, the victim's husband, Koshan Alemy, is a known member of the UN gang.

RCMP Cpl. Dale Carr said police are investigating the possibility the victim was killed in a case of mistaken identity. KRISTEN THOMPSON /METRO VANCOUVER

Gang capital

- Vancouver is the national capital of gang activity, according to Canada's federal minister of public safety. Peter Van Loan made the comment yesterday morning in Langley where he added that Vancouver has the highest number of gangs in any area in the country and the most sophisticated.

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Podborski, Juneau given Olympic roles
Olympic medallists Steve Podborski and Joé Juneau were named as assistant Chefs de Mission for the Canadian Olympic Team at the Vancouver 2010 Olympics. Podborski, is a member of the Crazy Canucks alpine team, while Juneau played 11 seasons in the NHL. METRO VANCOUVER

Local

Games housing update today

Vancouver city manager Penny Ballem, left, is providing an update on the financial progress of the Olympic Village project today. About 250 social housing units may be slashed after the cost of the affordable housing component rose to an estimated $110 million — a 70 per cent increase.

METRO VANCOUVER

$740M deficits, but no new taxes

Health care, education scheduled to see big influxes of spending

JEFF HODSON
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British Columbia will post deficits totalling $740 million over the next two years and there will be no tax hikes, the province's finance minister announced yesterday.

Spending on health care, education and social services will increase, while other government ministries and Crown corporations will undergo "significant belt tightening," Colin Hansen said yesterday morning at a pre-budget lockup in Victoria.

"Our priority has been to protect the vital health care, education and social programs that British Columbians have come to rely on, and depend on, and have become even more important to us as we go through the kind of economic challenges that the province, and indeed the world, is going through today."

Budget 2009 predicts a deficit of $495 million in 2009/10 and $245 million in 2010/11, returning to balanced budgets by 2011.

Health-care spending will increase by $766 million in 2009 to $14.1 billion, while education spending is set to rise $87 million to almost $1.8 billion.

"All ministries," Hansen said, "have gone through a very significant belt-tightening exercise. We have tried to identify all areas of discretionary spending and find ways to reduce those budgets that do not impact on the direct delivery of those vital ... services."

The savings, projected at $1.9 billion over three years, will result from a 22 per cent decrease in travel spending and a 76 per cent reduction in advertising budgets. Other savings would be found in attrition, scaled-back hiring and more efficient use of human resources, Hansen said. An additional $250 million in savings will be found by the end of 2011/12.

The budget, however, has risks, including a lack of funding for the next round of public-sector wage negotiations, the majority of which expire in March 2010.

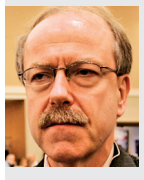
JEFF HODSON/METRO VANCOUVER

B.C. Finance Minister Colin Hansen delivers the provincial budget in Victoria yesterday.

What did you think of the budget?

Darryl Walker, B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union

"I don't see this as a particularly large stimulus budget. It's certainly not status quo. In some ministries we're seeing cuts ... the bottom line is that workers in the field will have more work to do with less people to be able to do that."



Jock Finlayson, Business Council of B.C.

"They chose to go back into deficit. We're not very enthusiastic about returning to deficit, but I think the case for doing so is strong in this environment. We do want to see a plan to come back into a balanced budget ... it's a very unsettled environment. There's more uncertainty than I've ever seen in my career about what the economy is going to look like."

Ian Bruce, David Suzuki Foundation

"The carbon tax has been maintained. It is the core of the B.C. Climate Action Plan. Obviously we're pleased to see that's there, but we're disappointed in the lack of investment in transit and green-energy technology."

Lynn Spence, Mental Health Association

"We didn't hear a lot about homelessness and housing for the mentally ill. There's been a lot of work happening with that regard, but our concern was about that loss of momentum, of that possibly slowing down."

JEFF HODSON /METRO VANCOUVER

Games security 'accommodated' in B.C. budget

JEFF HODSON
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VANCOUVER 2010 Games

BUDGET The province's share of the security costs for the 2010 Olympics are "accommodated" within the three-year fiscal plan of Budget 2009, Finance Minister Colin Hansen said yesterday.

"The federal government has the responsibility for Olympic security. What we have is a responsibility for 50 per cent of a portion of the costs," said Hansen, who was asked a number of times about the security costs for the 2010 Vancouver Games, which are expected to far outstrip the initial estimate of $175 million.

The province has committed $600 million for staging and hosting the 2010 Games, including $87.5 million for Olympic security. The province has funded $13 million in previous years and will be transferring the balance of the money to the federal government soon. Hansen said the province is finalizing its agreement with Ottawa and was expecting to have the deal concluded three weeks ago.

"I can assure you that all of our obligations with regards to Olympic security can be accommodated within the plan that is before you today," Hansen said, adding that he is hopeful Olympic security will be announced by the federal government sometime next week.

"I think people are looking for a number that is much, much larger than our obligations amount to."

Olympic/Paralympic Centre opens tomorrow

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VANCOUVER 2010 Games

OPENING A new Olympic venue will open its doors to the public for the first time tomorrow.

The Vancouver Olympic/Paralympic Centre near Nat Bailey Stadium will host the curling events during the 2010 Games.

Georgina Wheatcroft

The free opening celebrations run from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. and will feature dance, music and drumming performances, curling and inukshuk-building demos, and a chance to meet Olympic and Paralympic athletes.

Vancouver curler Georgina Wheatcroft, who won the bronze medal at the Salt Lake City Games, said the sport is different from many other Winter Olympic events in that athletes can train in their home rinks.

"You can really be any shape, size or age to curl, and you can even be in a wheelchair," she said. "But when you get to an elite level there are a lot of tournaments and you curl in an arena."

KRISTEN THOMPSON/METRO VANCOUVER

Workers prepare the ice sheet at the Vancouver Olympic/Paralympic Centre. The venue, which will host curling events during the 2010 Games, opens tomorrow.

The new curling centre will allow Vancouver to host more world-class curling competitions.

"What's most important about this venue is there's a legacy to be left ... and the Vancouver Curling Club will move into here and have a great state-of-the-art facility and hopefully get all sorts of new members," Wheatcroft said.

Championships

- The new venue will be hosting its first sporting event — the World Wheelchair Curling Championships, from Feb. 21 to 28, followed by the World Junior Curling Championships from March 5 to 15.

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WHAT'S ONLINE TODAY

Video Sovereigntists claim victory after Ottawa cancels Plains of Abraham re-enactment at **metronews.ca/canada**

Video Harper confident that General Motors will stay in Canada at **metronews.ca/canada**

Alleged polygamists in court this morning

Winston Blackmore, who is accused of having 20 wives, and James Oler, accused of being married to two women, are making a court appearance in Creston this morning to fight polygamy charges. Their lawyers say they plan to base their defence on the legality of gay marriage and religious freedom. METRO VANCOUVER

Krall fundraiser nets $2M

TARYN MCELHERAN
for Metro Vancouver

An invitation-only black tie fundraising event hosted by Diana Krall raised more than $2 million for research to benefit blood cancer patients and their families at Vancouver General Hospital.

Krall, along with her husband, Elvis Costello, and special guests Elton John, James Taylor and Sarah McLachlan wooed more than 550 guests with great music and a live auction on Monday night.

Elton John offered two people the chance to have their lyrics set to music, penned and recorded by him for a mere $250,000.

For $120,000, one could get an all-inclusive getaway for 10 to Clayoquot Wilderness Resort, compliments of the Radcliffe Foundation, which includes a night of campfire songs performed by Sarah McLachlan.

"I'm honoured that my husband, Elvis Costello, my dear friends James Taylor, Elton John and Sarah McLachlan, and so many generous donors and sponsors have joined us in our family's vision of great care combined with comfort and hope for a cure," said Krall.

JEFF VINICK/FOR METRO VANCOUVER

James Taylor, Sarah McLachlan, Elton John, Diana Krall and Elvis Costello at the Diana Krall VGH and UBC Hospital Foundation fundraiser in Vancouver.

Pharmacists tussle with fraud: Study

PRESCRIPTIONS Pharmacists in B.C. are struggling to respond to prescription fraud, according to a study released by the University of the Fraser Valley.

Co-author Amanda McCormick, research co-ordinator for the university's Centre for Social Responsibility, said pharmacists know they can refuse filling fraudulent prescriptions but don't because they are afraid of the consequences.

"They are worried about how the patient will react to them if they accuse them of bringing in a fraudulent prescription or of abusing drugs," she said yesterday. "They feel like they have the capacity to recognize when there is fraud ... but more often than not it's a suspicion and they can't confirm it."

They usually don't involve the police because they feel it is not an issue they should deal with.

McCormick suggested something similar to the Serve it Right program that's implemented in bars and restaurants, where one person can identify when a patron is abusing alcohol or has had too much to drink.

"We're thinking that a similar thing might work with pharmacies. It will allow the people who are more comfortable to be the ones who actually confront the patients," said McCormick. TARYN MCELHERAN /FOR METRO VANCOUVER

News in brief

BODY FOUND The body of a man in his 80s was found yesterday by a couple hiking on Grouse Mountain. RCMP investigators say it appears the man slid down an embankment and had to use a helicopter to lift the body out.

INQUIRY Robert Dziekanski's movements in the seconds before he died looked like those of people struggling to breathe after choking, an inquiry into his death heard yesterday. Trevor Enchelmaier also told the Braidwood Inquiry that it took about 10 minutes for an ambulance to arrive. METRO NEWS SERVICES

PETA to launch year-long seal hunt campaign

VANCOUVER 2010 Games

When the world arrives in Vancouver for the 2010 Games, an animal rights organization is vowing to have protesters here draped in fake seal fur and red paint.

The seal hunt is Canada's shame, according to Bruce Friedrich, spokesperson for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).

"As much as China was subjected to international condemnation for their human rights record in advance of the Beijing Games, we plan to focus worldwide attention on the fact that Canada is now synonymous with the bloody massacre of hundreds of thousands of baby seals," Friedrich said.

PETA is launching its year-long campaign today at Vancouver City Hall. It will include billboards and demonstrations all over the world.

Logo parody

- PETA has created a parody of the Olympic logo targeting the seal hunt that it will use in its campaign.

"People in China were not thrilled to have what they saw as the glory of the Olympics coming to Beijing besmirched by China's human rights record," Friedrich said. "Similarly, if Canada does not want to be subjected to international condemnation, it should abolish the annual seal massacre." FERNANDO CARNEIRO /METRO VANCOUVER

ShareYourViews
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Two drugstores hit for narcotics, cash at gunpoint

TARYN MCELHERAN
for Metro Vancouver

INVESTIGATION Langley RCMP are investigating after two separate yet similar armed robberies that occurred in different drugstores.

Both were held up at gunpoint by thieves demanding narcotics and cash.

The first robbery occurred at Pharmasave on the 9100 block of Fraser Highway on Monday at about 4:30 p.m. The suspects were described to be in their 20s and wearing dark sunglasses and hoodies.

The second occurred just after 2 p.m. yesterday at an IDA Pharmacy on the 20600 block of Fraser Highway. The suspect was said to be in his late 30s, heavy-set and wearing a toque.

Anyone with information is asked to contact the RCMP at 604-532-3200 or CrimeStoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS.

Parkade workers complain of Mickey D's exhaust

FUMES Underground parking attendants at a downtown Vancouver parkade are complaining that exhaust fumes from the McDonald's upstairs are making them sick.

The attendants have complained of headaches, itchy eyes, dizziness and disorientation while working on the job, CBC News Online reports.

The EasyPark parkade is in the Library Square complex owned by the city.

The restaurant exhaust from McDonald's is run through a ventilation system that blows the fumes into the enclosed parking lot instead of outside.

According to city documents, there have been complaints about the exhaust situation since 2001. METRO NEWS SERVICES

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External artificial lung used to keep patient alive

In a world first, doctors at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto performed an innovative operation using an external artificial lung to keep a pediatric patient alive until new donor lungs were available. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Canada

RIM settles with U.S. regulator

BlackBerry maker Research in Motion's top executives settled U.S. regulator claims that they illegally backdated millions of stock options over an eight-year period, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission said yesterday. Officials with the Canadian company, including co-CEO James Balsillie, left, did not admit to or deny the SEC's allegations. The company agreed to pay $1.43 million in fines REUTERS

Obama thankful for Afghan effort

Obama's**Visit**

While thanking Canadians for their contributions to the Afghan war effort, U.S. President Barack Obama has suggested dramatic improvement in the war could convince Canadians to remain engaged in the troubled country past 2011, when troops are due to return home.

Obama said he doesn't plan to ask Prime Minister Stephen Harper to extend the country's commitment past the withdrawal date when the two leaders meet tomorrow. But he said conditions could change dramatically leading up the scheduled withdrawal.

"We've got until 2011, according to the Canadian legislature, and I think it's important for the Canadian legislature and the people of Canada to get a sense that what they're doing is productive," Obama said in an interview yesterday with CBC News.

Obama said he plans to tap Harper's support for the "comprehensive strategy" he is drawing up for the international effort in Afghanistan that focuses on development and diplomacy.

During the interview, Obama also expressed his "heartfelt thanks" to the Canadian families who have shouldered the burden of Canada's "extraordinary" contribution in the war-torn country.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Ottawa **Security beefed up for big visit**

CHRIS WATTIE/REUTERS

A man walks past a security barrier and an RCMP car yesterday on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. Security has been beefed up in advance of U.S. President Barack Obama's visit tomorrow, his first foreign trip since taking over the White House last month.

Media fighting for 'right to be wrong'

CHALLENGE The Supreme Court of Canada, faced with an appeal that could establish a new defence against defamation lawsuits, has challenged Canadian media organizations to justify why journalists should be given a greater "right to be wrong."

Several media organizations argued yesterday that the court should endorse a "public interest-responsible journalism" defence that would shield reporters from lawsuits and protect the public's right to know — even if the truth of an article cannot be proved.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

News in brief

PETS As the economy deteriorates, people who work with animals say they're getting more calls from pet owners who can no longer afford to keep their animals or their vet bills. This comes amid reports from the U.S. that large numbers of animals are being left behind in foreclosed homes or abandoned in shelters

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Landry fined for speeding
Former Quebec premier Bernard Landry received a $1,000 speeding ticket for driving more than double the speed limit on Feb. 5 in the Montérégie town of Saint-Basile-le-Grand. **CBC NEW ONLINE**

Church loses its charitable status

An evangelical church that used donor money to pay for gym memberships, Gucci fashion accessories and trips to Hawaii and elsewhere for its directors has been stripped of its charitable licence by the federal government.

The Dominion Christian Centre of Canada was set up in Hamilton by charismatic leader Peter Rigo, a former decorator who says a divine power summoned him in the year 2000 to "encourage believers to live effectively as Christians." Rigo has said Dominion is a great church praying for the revitalization of downtown Hamilton; at least one family claims it is a cult and faces criminal charges for trying to remove their daughter.

After an audit of the church's books, sparked by critics of its activities, the federal charity regulator has told the Dominion group that its assets have been misused, spent for the "private benefit" of Rigo, his wife and others.

The regulator found that money contributed by donors and destined for good works, was instead paid to fund "numerous personal trips, payments for privately used vehicles, gym memberships, food, lodging and other unsubstantiated payments."

Among the expenses that raised eyebrows, auditors say, were numerous purchases at "expensive fashion outlets such as Gucci and Dolce Gabbana."

The audit says the transgressions of Rigo, his wife, Peggy (also a pastor), and assistant pastor Dave Barhouma, were many.

In response to the allegations, church leaders told the regulator that poor bookkeeping made it hard for them to address many of the concerns auditors had. The audit states that about a year ago, the church agreed to stop paying for food, trips, gym memberships and haircuts for church leaders. However, the audit goes on to say that a year later, the church had not addressed the issues raised by the audit, giving rise to the revocation of its licence.

In Canada, most churches are charities. This allows them to raise donations by providing an income tax receipt to donors, and also allows them to operate without paying any taxes.

The auditors also found that the church had issued bogus tax receipts inflating the value of land it owns in Hamilton. The audit does not identify the people who benefited from this arrangement.

Peter Rigo and Barhouma were previously on the board of directors, as well as being officials of the church. The audit states they have recently resigned from their board positions.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Loss of licence

- Losing charitable status for the Dominion church does not close it down, but it makes it more difficult to raise money and means they will have to start paying property and other taxes.

Quebec City **Re-enactment cancelled**

MATHIEU BELANGER/REUTERS

Andre Juneau, director of the National Battlefields Commission, answers questions after a news conference yesterday in Quebec City. The National Battlefields Commission has cancelled a re-enactment of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham set for this summer due to security concerns that the mock battle could turn into a modern-day conflict, after some sovereigntists have threatened violence.

Western climate plan could prolong recession: Study

CAP-AND-TRADE A cap-and-trade program planned for the western United States and Canada could prolong the economic recession and chase high technology investment to other regions, according to a new study commissioned by a group of business leaders.

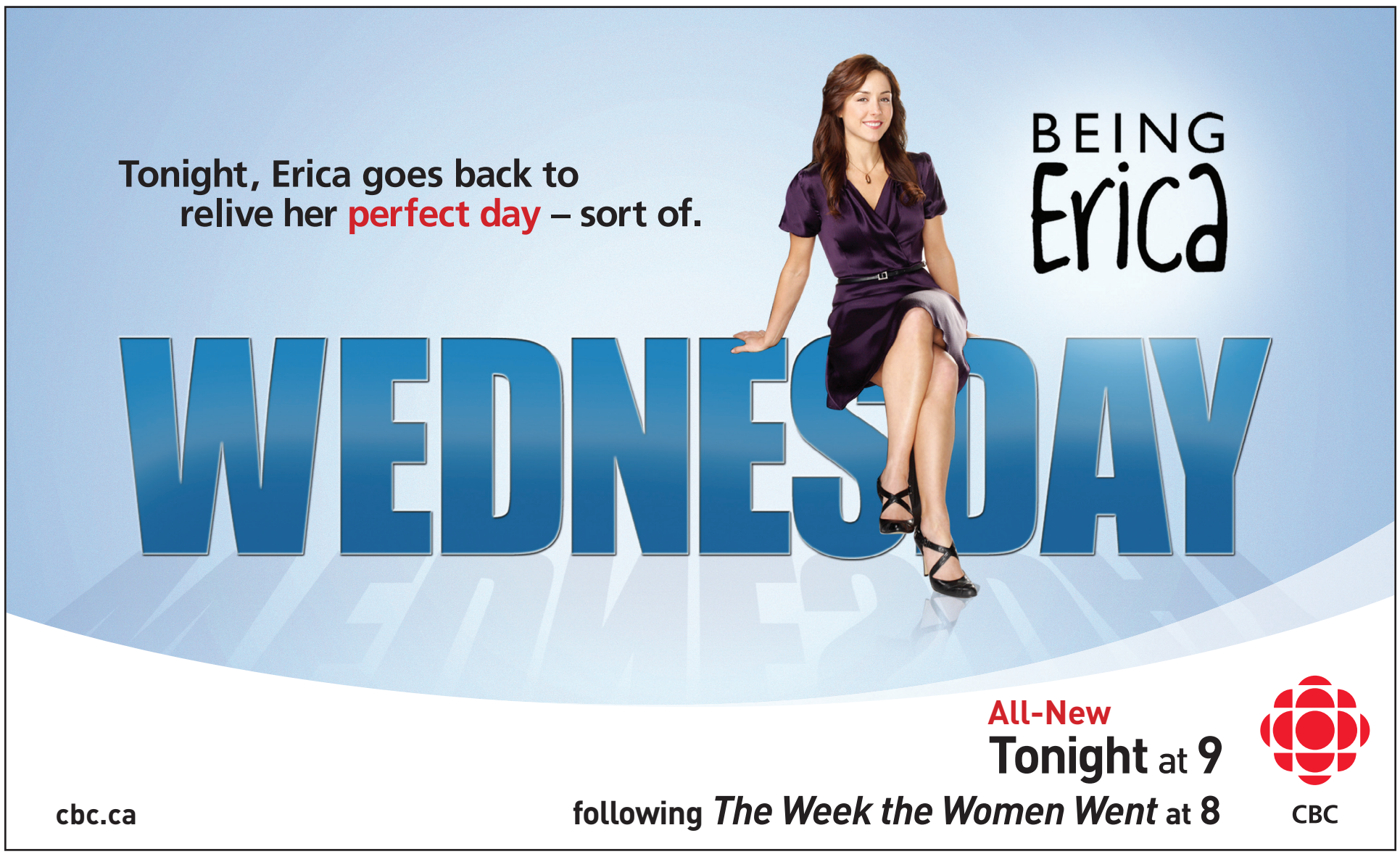
The Western Business Roundtable's study criticized a plan by seven states and four Canadian provinces — B.C., Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec — to establish the biggest carbon market in the Western hemisphere in 2012.

Resistance to national carbon-cutting goals by former U.S. president George W. Bush prompted the creation of the Western Climate Initiative, which is spearheaded by California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

According to the study, the WCI plan could weaken the West's already overburdened power grids by deploying intermittent power sources such as wind farms and solar plants too rapidly.

It would also increase energy costs, harming low-income and minority families, the study said.

REUTERS



British lawyer sentenced in Berlusconi bribery case

British lawyer David Mills has been sentenced to more than four years in prison for corruption over accepting a $600,000 US bribe from Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi in 1997. Berlusconi currently has immunity in the case, in which he had been charged with paying Mills the bribe to withhold incriminating details about his business dealings. **REUTERS**

World

Kosovo marks independence

Tens of thousands of Kosovo Albanians celebrated the first anniversary of their declaration of independence yesterday, despite President Fatmir Sejdiu's warning that Serbia is challenging its former province's secession. Kosovo seceded from Serbia in 2008, nine years after the end of the 1998-1999 war between Belgrade's security forces and ethnic Albanian guerrillas. REUTERS

Khmer Rouge torturer on trial

The chief Khmer Rouge torturer went on trial for crimes against humanity yesterday, the first senior Pol Pot cadre to be tried by the "Killing Fields" court three decades after the deaths of 1.7 million Cambodians.

Kaing Guek Eav, alias Duch and ex-commandant of the notorious S-21 prison, did not address the court, but sat impassively as lawyers haggled over procedural matters.

Hundreds of victims, including saffron-robed Buddhist monks who were persecuted during the 1975-79 Khmer Rouge era, packed the public gallery, reacting with anger and relief at the sight of 66-year-old Duch in the dock.

"This is the day we have waited for for 30 years," said Vann Nath, 63, one of a handful of survivors from S-21 where at least 14,000 "enemies of the revolution" were tortured and killed.

This week's hearings will lay the groundwork for a full-blown trial in March, when Duch and survivors are expected to testify.

Kaing Guek Eav, alias Duch

Duch, now a born-again Christian, has expressed remorse before facing the joint Cambodian-UN tribunal, set up to prosecute "those most responsible" for one of the darkest chapters of the 20th century.

Duch also faces charges of war crimes, torture and homicide while chief of S-21, where victims were forced to confess to crimes and then shot or beaten to death in the "Killing Fields" outside the capital.

Only 12 survived, according to the U.S.-funded Documentation Center of Cambodia, which has researched the Khmer Rouge era. **REUTERS**

Brazil **Underwear Day**

ROBERTO JAYME/REUTERS

Brazilian models dance at a bus station during the third edition of "Brazilian Underwear Day" in Brasilia yesterday. The day is inspired by a similar event which has taken place at Times Square in New York City since 2003.

News in brief

CONNECTICUT Police shot and killed a 200-pound chimpanzee that had once starred in television commercials after the ape nearly killed its owner's friend and attacked a police cruiser on Monday.

RACISM The return of the United States to UN talks on racism could prove pivotal to salvaging an international conference plagued by charges of Israel-bashing, human rights activists said yesterday.

SPAIN A Spanish soldier and his Russian girlfriend were arrested yesterday for posting videos on the Internet calling for Islamist attacks in Spain to recover former Muslim territories, the National Police said.

ADVERTISING China has banned actors and other "non-accredited personnel" from playing medical experts in advertisements for drugs, state media reported on Monday. **REUTERS**

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Protesters burn cars, wreck shops on island

GUADELOUPE Protesters ransacked shops and burned cars in Guadeloupe overnight as a strike over the cost of living escalated, and one senior local official said the Caribbean island was "on the verge of revolt."

Guadeloupe, a French overseas region, has been brought to a standstill for nearly a month by strikes and demonstrations over high prices for food and other necessities.

The situation has degenerated over the past two days as protesters have set up road blocks and police have arrested dozens of people.

The government in Paris has refused to budge on a demand for a 200-euro ($316 Cdn) monthly raise for low-paid workers. **REUTERS**

Background

- Guadeloupe depends on costly imports for much of its requirements and prices for many staples are far higher than in mainland France, while salaries are generally lower and unemployment is high.

Obama signs stimulus

ECONOMY U.S. President Barack Obama signed a $787-billion US economic stimulus bill into law yesterday as global markets plunged on fears that the recession would deepen despite government action in many countries.

Obama, who has described the package as one part of a plan to solve his country's economic ills, was expected to lay out a strategy today to stem home foreclosures and address the housing crisis that sparked the financial sector meltdown.

The White House has said it will take about a month for the money to start flowing from the package. It includes working-class tax cuts, infrastructure spending, help for the poor and unemployed, and investment in alternative energy. **REUTERS**

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3 p.m.	1 p.m. or 7 p.m.	1 p.m. or 7 p.m.	9 a.m. or 1 p.m.
Sheraton Vancouver Guildford Hotel	**Sheraton Vancouver Guildford Hotel**	**Langley City Coast Hotel & Convention Centre**	**Vancouver Marriott Pinnacle Downtown**
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Comment & Views

Comment

21st century transfers

NoBorders

Deborah Coyne
dmr.coyne@rogers.com

How many times must Premier Danny Williams verbally explode about "equalization" before the Harper government abandons its hyper-partisan approach to serious matters of national interest? Equalization is a very serious matter, which, together with other federal-provincial transfers for health, education and social services, plays a critical role in promoting equality of opportunity and comparable levels of services across Canada. This commitment defines a great nation.

Regrettably we can no longer measure how well the myriad of federal contributions to the provinces, including equalization, helps to ensure comparable public services across Canada. No amount of tinkering with the arcane equalization formula will fix this fundamental problem, especially since too many other federal programs incorporate confusing equalizing elements that exacerbate inequities among Canadians. The best example is Employment Insurance, which is structured to benefit the unemployed who live in weaker areas of the country.

There is urgent need to bring coherence, consistency and accountability to the jumble of federal contributions to provinces, especially with Ontario qualifying for equalization.

Unfortunately the Harper government has no interest in promoting comparable public services — the recent manifestation of this being the elimination of all federal funds for child care operations.

Harper's seemingly real agenda is to downsize the national government, download responsibilities and fiscal room, permanently eliminating Ottawa's ability to pursue national standards and objectives in most public services and programs.

With every month in power, Harper draws closer to achieving his goal.

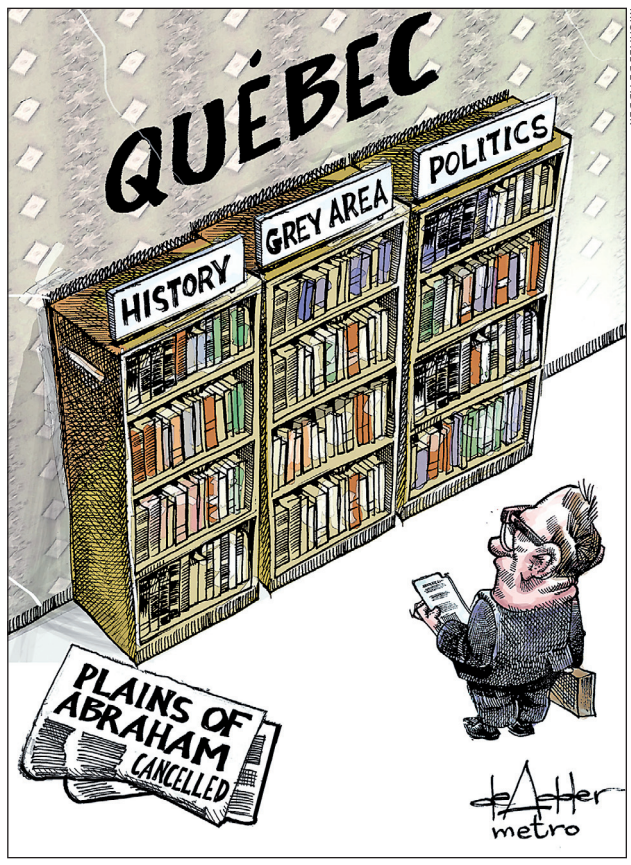
Harper's signature step — the GST cuts — reducing national revenue by $60 billion over five years, was a bad step in the best of times, universally condemned by economists, and now cripples the national government's ability to respond in this, the worst of times.

Yet Harper refuses to reconsider.

Ottawa's already small share of national income, by far the lowest of any central government in the developed world, will continue to shrink to historic lows.

Opposition parties must directly challenge this agenda. Explain to Canadians why we must stop weakening the fiscal position of the federal government — taking care not to turn national politics into a complex and excruciatingly boring accounting problem. Propose the establishment of a permanent non-partisan advisory commission (similar to Australia) to make the system of federal contributions to provinces more transparent and subject to public scrutiny. And ensure that, through the commission, decisions relating to federal-provincial fiscal relations are based on intelligent debate and reflect longer-term national objectives to build stronger ties among Canadians rather than weakening them.

Deborah Coyne ran as a Liberal candidate in the 2006 federal election and is a public policy consultant who runs canadianswithoutborders.blogspot.com.



MICHAEL DE ADDER

Word on the street: Do you think U.S. President Barack Obama will usher in a new era of Canada/U.S. relations?

Shaunna Prentis
age 34, Vancouver
A:Yes I do just because Barack seems like a much more open-minded and nice leader than Bush was.

Meryl Heppner
age 20, Vancouver
A: Yes, because I think that Obama already has a lot of Canadian supporters because we were afraid of what Bush might try to do.

Karen Faris
age 43, Ottawa visitor from Rochester, N.Y.
A: I think he'll reach out and try to make things better. His intent is inclusiveness.

Maciej Kowalski
age 27, Vancouver
A: I'm hoping it's better. I know that Canada is America's biggest trading partner so if that goes down that will affect both our economies.

Stacey Ireland
age 20, Toronto
A: I have a feeling that if the stimulus package doesn't go over well, then there might be some tension.

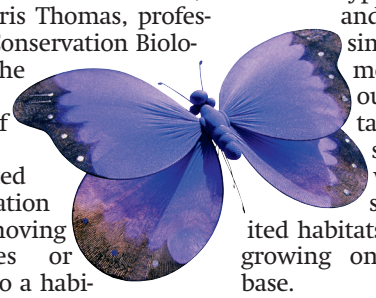
Scott Book
age 33, Edmonton
A: I think he'll improve relations just because he's well liked. People will listen to what he says.

Worth mentioning

Moving animals might save them from climate change

An experiment relocating butterfly colonies in Britain shows animals and plants can be moved to new, cooler habitats to help them survive global warming, scientists said yesterday.

"Very many species around the world are moving because of climate change. But they are often moving slowly, lagging behind shifts in the climate," said Chris Thomas, professor of Conservation Biology at the University of York.



Assisted colonization — moving creatures or plants to a habitat that has become suitable because of global warming — could help to safeguard wildlife and avert extinctions, he said.

In an experiment, batches of marbled white and small skipper butterflies were caught in north England in 1999 and 2000 and taken up to 65 kilometres north of the northernmost edges of their ranges, to areas identified as suitable by computer climate models.

"Both populations have become established and are thriving," Brian Huntley, a professor of environmental changes at the University of Durham who was among the authors of a study published in the journal Conservation Letters, told Reuters.

Some types of animals and plants were simply unable to move to search out new habitats, the study said. Marbled whites, for instance, like limited habitats such as grass growing on a limestone base.

The scientists said it was the first example of assisted colonization linked to climate change, including assessments in advance to judge if the new arrivals would disrupt the new habitat.

Thomas said that assisted colonization could be applied anywhere, from Australian tropical forests to coral reefs. REUTERS

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Trump casino unit files for bankruptcy
Trump Entertainment Resorts Inc., the casino operator of the Trump Taj Mahal, Trump Plaza and Trump Marina that's named for Donald Trump, filed for bankruptcy protection yesterday as the recession and declining gambling revenues took its toll. **REUTERS**

Business

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EDITOR: FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Obama plan alarms some in oil sector

Canada's oilsands industry, battered by collapsing oil prices, also faces the prospect of ballooning costs as the United States and Canada prepare to discuss energy security and efforts to fight global warming.

When U.S. President Barack Obama visits Ottawa Thursday, energy will be a key topic in his talks with Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who often touts Canada as an emerging energy superpower due to its massive oilsands resources.

Oilsands producers worry that Obama's plan for a cap-and-trade system to reduce emissions of greenhouse gasses could make their operations too costly with buying and selling permits — especially at current depressed oil prices. Harper also has voiced support for a cap-and-trade system.

Environmental groups call the oilsands "dirty oil" and say its development is hazardous to communities and the environment. Some in the Obama camp appeared to agree with that message during the election, and producers fret about the push for standards that reward low carbon emissions. **REUTERS**

Obama's**Visit**

Viewpoints

- The White House has so far been mum on what official stance the president will take on oilsands.
- The Council for Foreign Relations said the issue will test "how the administration balances energy security and climate change."
- The Canadian Association of Petroleum Markets said "the real key for us is to set a framework."

Starbucks **Instant coffee**

SHANNON STAPLETON/REUTERS

Starbucks Corp. CEO Howard Schultz explains the Starbucks VIA Ready Brew product, an instant coffee that sells for less than $1 per cup, during a news conference in New York yesterday.

Bank stocks take a beating

INVESTORS Bank stocks endured another pitiless pounding yesterday amid escalating fears the global financial system remains in jeopardy, despite unprecedented government intervention.

The carnage began in Asia where Woori Finance Holdings Co., which is seeking government aid, sank 6.8 per cent as the cost for South Korean banks to borrow dollars hit a record.

European bank stocks — including Swedbank AB, Deutsche Bank AG and Société Générale SA — also tanked after Moody's Investors Service said it may downgrade lenders with units in the eastern part of that continent.

That, in turn, soured sentiment on Wall Street as investors dumped shares of Bank of America Corp., Citigroup Inc. and JPMorgan Chase & Co.

Investors were also worried that General Motors Corp. and Chrysler LLC might not be able to prove that they can repay billions of dollars in government loans and return to profitability.

And markets were casting doubt on whether the U.S. government's massive stimulus package would succeed in reviving the economy, even as President Barack Obama signed the $787-billion US plan into law.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Business in brief

AUTOS Prime Minister Stephen Harper said he is confident General Motors will maintain an industry link in Canada, despite a possibility the automaker may move out of Canada as it restructures its operations in Canada and the U.S.

RADIO Sirius XM Radio won a reprieve from its $1 billion US in debt deadlines yesterday after Liberty Media Corp. agreed to lend $530 million to help the satellite radio provider fend off bankruptcy. In return, Liberty stands to take a controlling stake in the company. **REUTERS**

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Kovalev asked to take a break

Struggling veteran forward Alex Kovalev, left, has been given some time off by the Montreal Canadiens. General Manager Bob Gainey said yesterday he met with Kovalev to tell him he won't be on the team's trip this week for games tonight in Washington and tomorrow in Pittsburgh. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Sports

"I knew we weren't taking Tic Tacs ... I didn't think they were steroids."

Alex Rodriguez at a Yankees news conference yesterday, discussing how his cousin introduced him to the performance-enhancing drug "boli" in 2001, saying it was an over-the-counter substance in the Dominican Republic. Rodriguez blamed his use of it on being young and naive. METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: JOHN.CHICK@METRONEWS.CA

Lumsden signs with Eskimos

CFL The Edmonton Eskimos announced yesterday that coveted free agent running back Jesse Lumsden has agreed to terms on a one-year contract with an option.

Lumsden

Widely considered one of the CFL's top young stars and premier Canadian running back, the Edmonton-born Lumsden played his first four pro seasons with Hamilton.

"Jesse Lumsden is the complete package — he's got the ability to run tackle to tackle with power and challenge you with his speed and strength," said Eskimo general manager and director of football operations Danny Maciocia.

"We expect he'll make a big impact on our offence."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Canucks win in shootout

SCOTT RINTOUL
for Metro Vancouver

NHL RESULT

Flames 3 **Canucks** 4 (SO)

VS

THE SKINNY: Pavol Demitra scored the only goal of the shootout while Todd Bertuzzi rung his attempt off the post as the Canucks rallied for a late win in Calgary. Kevin Bieksa's goal with just 51 seconds to play sent the game to overtime, while Ryan Kesler scored a pair in the victory. Calgary captain Jarome Iginla snapped a seven-games goal-less drought in the loss.

THE STAR: Mikka Kiprusoff was unbelievable in the third period. His diving stick save on Kyle Wellwood and a desperate glove snag on Mats Sundin snuffed out a great power-play by the Canucks halfway through the final frame.

FINALLY: The Canucks had lost six straight shootouts prior to last night's win. Vancouver improved to 2-6 in the breakaway competition this season.

UNFAMILIAR TERRITORY: Wellwood's trip to the box for high-sticking was his first penalty since April 11, 2006, a span of 160 games.

THE RATING: A good pace, plenty of chances and the requisite amount of edge produced an outstanding game between the Northwest rivals. 5 out of 5 stars.

TODD KOROL/REUTERS

Vancouver Canucks forward Mats Sundin, right, and teammate Ryan Kesler celebrate Kesler's second-period goal against the Calgary Flames yesterday.

THE NEXT GAME: The Canucks head east to the nation's capital for a Thursday night showdown with the red hot Ottawa Senators, who are just off a five-game win streak.

Sports in brief

MLB Ken Griffey, Jr. has reportedly decided to play with Atlanta, rather than return to Seattle, and will soon finalize a deal to join the Braves for the 2009 season. According to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Griffey's agent and the Braves were scheduled to meet yesterday to finish the deal, though an official announcement will not be made until as early as today.

Griffey

NBA The Oklahoma City Thunder have acquired centre Tyson Chandler from New Orleans in a deal that sends veterans Joe Smith and Chris Wilcox to the Hornets. After years of trying to draft and develop a front-line centre, the move finally gives the Thunder a proven talent inside. Chandler has averaged 8.8 points and 8.3 rebounds a game this season.

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Vick's home up for auction
Imprisoned NFL star Michael Vick's suburban Atlanta home will be offered for sale to the highest bidder on March 10. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Soccer's Impact

As Ottawa continues its CFL vs. MLS debate and the Vancouver Whitecaps wait patiently in the wings for word on their MLS franchise, the Montreal Impact, the unassuming USL-1 franchise, just set the all-time attendance record for a CONCACAF game.

With little less than a week before their quarterfinal Champions League match against Mexican side Santos Laguna, the Impact announced Monday that they have sold 43,000 tickets to Olympic Stadium.

Let me repeat that once more — Montreal, in the dead of winter, in the heart of Habs country, just sold 43,000 seats to a soccer game.

Ole, ole, ole, non?

It's not as strange as you might think — the late '70s and early '80s were filled with these kinds of numbers. In 1983, 60,432 showed up at B.C. Place to watch Vancouver take on the Seattle Sounders. Their average attendance that year was well over 29,000.

In 1981, 58,542 cheered the Montreal Manic past the Chicago Sting — both now defunct franchises. Montreal's average attendance that year topped 23,000.

Toronto FC supporters will point to their past two seasons of stadium sell-outs as proof of the beautiful game returning to popularity in Canada, but, for Montreal, it is certainly the high water mark in the wave of the game's rising interest.

But two things, beyond the attendance, are needed to make this moment last as a Canadian success story.

One, the club has to get a decent result at the Big O. If Santos wipes the pitch with them, those waves of interest will recede quickly in Montreal. Bluntly, the odds are stacked against them. Santos is approaching midseason form in the Mexican Premier league while Montreal is still shaking off its winter hibernation. The two-game home and away format allows for few mistakes but even a tie in next Wednesday's game would give the Impact hope of advancing to the CONCACAF semi-finals.

Two, the winter weather has got to co-operate. It was nearly 10 years ago that a very large chunk of that aging elephant collapsed on to a surprised auto show and since then, little winter activity has been permitted.

The City of Montreal has put strict conditions on its use: There can be no snow or ice on the roof at kickoff, there can be no snow or ice on the tower at kickoff and in the 24 hours prior to kickoff there can be no snowfall or freezing rain forecast.

So, basically, there may be no kickoff.

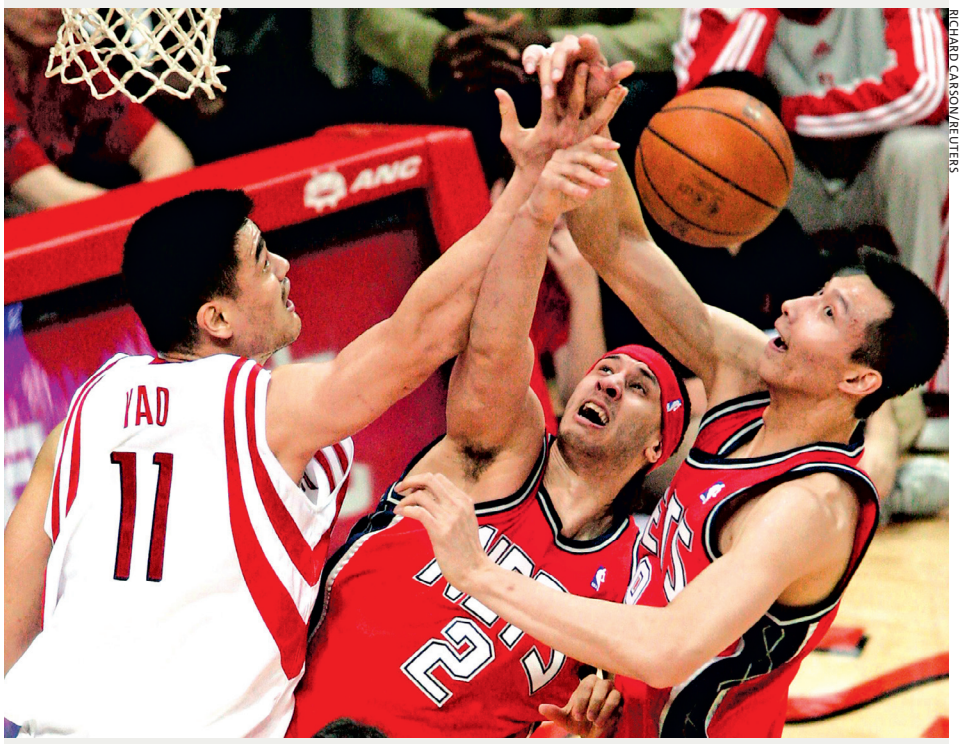
The following night will be the makeup date — but after that, no one is quite sure what will happen.

For those who have pained for the return to the game's popularity of 20 years ago, now would be the time to put aside your club allegiances and get behind the Impact for the sake of the game.

Or, if that's too much to ask, at the very least, pray for some good weather.

Watch Ben Rycroft on the It's Called Football show every Sunday at metronews.ca

NBA Yao gets the better of Yi


RICHARD CARSON/REUTERS

Houston Rockets centre Yao Ming, left, battles for a rebound with Nets centre Josh Boone and forward Yi Jianlian last night. Yao finished with 20 points and 12 boards as Houston won 114-88.

SCOREBOARD

NHL

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS
Vancouver 4 Calgary 3 (SO)
Buffalo 4 Toronto 1
Colorado 3 Ottawa 2 (OT)
Boston 5 Carolina 1
Chicago 5 Tampa Bay 3
Florida 4 New Jersey 0
Edmonton at San Jose N

TONIGHT'S GAMES
N.Y. Islanders at N.Y. Rangers
St. Louis at Columbus
Montreal at Washington
Nashville at Detroit
Los Angeles at Anaheim

NBA

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS
Houston 114 New Jersey 88
Indiana 100 Philadelphia 91
Milwaukee 92 Detroit 86
New Orleans 100 Oklahoma City 98
New York 112 San Antonio 107 (OT)
Orlando 107 Charlotte 102 (OT)
Washington 111 Minnesota 103
Memphis at Utah N
L.A. Clippers at Phoenix N
Atlanta at L.A. Lakers N

TONIGHT'S GAMES
Cleveland at Toronto
Denver at Philadelphia
Indiana at Charlotte
Minnesota at Miami
Chicago at Milwaukee
Orlando at New Orleans
New Jersey at Dallas
Atlanta at Sacramento
Memphis at Portland
Phoenix at L.A. Clippers
L.A. Lakers at Golden State

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Metro Workology exclusive: Matters of the Heart

Don't miss Matters of the Heart, Metro's exclusive feature series in the Workology section. There are jobs to be had that focus on falling in love, falling out of love and everything in between; we will be digging up the stories for you, so check for Workology on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays and Metronews.ca/work as well.

Workology

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The Massachusetts Institute of Technology tops the Cybermetrics Lab's biannual Webometrics Ranking of World Universities, which measures "the performance and impact of universities through their web presence." METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: DOUGLAS.DUNLOP@METRONEWS.CA

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Tread lightly if indulging in a workplace romance

RAFAEL BRUSILOW
for Metro Canada

Dating in the workplace might be the last remaining romantic taboo, but that hasn't stopped plenty of people from letting cupid reign in the cubicle.

A 2008 Vault.com survey found almost half (46 per cent) of employees said they have been involved in an office romance and 13 per cent more said they hadn't but were willing to date within their office. Quick flings weren't the only source of romance: Twenty per cent of respondents said they met their spouse or long-term significant other in the office.

Dating coach April Braswell, who works in California's Silicon Valley and has plenty of experience matching up working singles, suggests attractions in the workplace are hardly surprising given that most people end up spending more time every day with co-workers than with anybody else.

"Work is where we spend at least eight-to-ten hours each day — you're dressed well, freshly showered and usually energetic. It's natural there's going to be chemistry," Braswell said.

Braswell does warn against dating within a smaller company of less than 30 employees, simply because privacy is almost impossible to maintain and fallout can be magnified if things go wrong.

"When you're in a small-sized company it really is too close for comfort. It starts to be really awkward and you need to have enough professional breathing room," Braswell said.

If you do start an office romance though, avoid letting it get out of hand.

"Go slowly so that people see you're being professional and neither of you is using each other."

Family always No. 1, even after losing a job

Riding the **Recession**

VANESSA GRECO
for Metro Canada

After three months unemployed, the reality of Sylvain Henry's job loss hit home.

It was nearly Christmas, and his 10-year-old son wanted an Xbox 360. As a laid-off software salesman, Henry couldn't afford the gaming console. For the first time, the father of two from Gatineau Que., couldn't spoil his kids.

"My children still love me, but in moments like that I really feel the pinch," said Henry, a 50-year-old divorcée. "Suddenly Mommy is richer than Daddy."

For many families, household tension starts with a pink slip. In January, as unemployment rate jumped to 7.2 per cent, thousands of jobs were lost across Canada. The trauma of being laid off can lead to several problems — anxiety, loss of pride, depression — unfolding at home.

"Unemployment can be a profound loss," said marriage and family therapist, William Cooke. "Like any other significant event, it can become a good family bonding experience, or move people apart."

Since his termination, Henry has become closer with his children, allaying their fears by goofing around with them.

"Right now, I'm shielding them from my worries," he said. "They have to go to school and live normal lives." In the meantime, Henry continues his job search.

But those who have difficultly managing their emotions might not be as optimistic. The distress of job loss can lead to marital breakdown, domestic violence or harshness with children, said psychologist Marilyn Miller.

For many families and relationships, household tension starts with a pink slip.

For 26 years, Miller has helped couples and families cope with conflict that might arise from job loss.

ACCEPT EMOTIONS

It's typical for the laid off to feel angry, frightened, or anxious. Rather than fight the blues, open up about them.

"By recognizing emotions you diffuse their strength," said Miller, adding although a spouse might also be afraid, they should promote encouragement.

Instead of comments like, "How are we going to pay the bills?" try rallying with your partner by saying, "We will pull together."

CARRY YOUR WEIGHT

Unexpected job loss can make someone feel expendable, but home is the perfect arena to build a sense of self-worth. Keeping up with renovations and chores is a positive way to contribute to your household.

"Do one useful thing a day," said Miller. "Send a resumé, make a phone call, just don't withdraw from the world."

LOOK AT THE BIGGER PICTURE

Consider the current economic climate. Instead of turning to self-destructive behaviour — excessive alcohol or food binges — think of your family. Would you rather lose your job or them?

FAKE IT TILL YOU MAKE IT

Pretending you're in good spirits can elevate your mood, said Miller. Don't isolate yourself, get dressed, sound enthusiastic and walk briskly. The family can get involved in a joint hobby or sport.

"You can have time alone," said Miller. "Just tell your family you need to reflect. Don't take things out on them."

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Aurora College cancels Aboriginal wellness worker program
Aurora College, in Inuvik, N.W.T., is terminating its Indigenous Wellness and Addictions Prevention diploma program due to a lack of funding and a high drop-out rate. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Employment law 101: Basic rights

WorkplaceLaw

Daniel Lublin
dan@canadaemploymentlawyer.com

"CRITICISM MAY NOT BE AGREEABLE, BUT IT IS NECESSARY."
–WINSTON CHURCHILL

This is as true in law as it is in life. Here is a sampling of some of the questions I received this week and the cautionary advice I provided to those employees.

UNJUST PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS: Employees often declare that a critical or negative review is either a form of harassment or management's concoction to force their resignation. This is not always so. For an unwarranted review to amount to a wrongful dismissal, an employer must have acted in bad faith and prevented the employee's improvement. Anticipating the havoc from the possibility that a critical evaluation could invite an employee to resign and then sue, in a recent Ontario case, the judge noted that negative reviews, per sé, do not lead to dismissal. Employers must be able to discuss work performance in an open and candid fashion "so long as the discussion is proffered in good faith." Therefore, for a court to tolerate an employee's lawsuit on these grounds, it must agree that a reasonable person would not be able to continue her job based upon a single or series of critical evaluations.

HARASSMENT: Most employees I consult with view themselves as harassed. But unlike a change in compensation or a clear demotion, harassment is a subjective concept, meaning that to make out a successful claim, it may depend more on the judge you happen to draw than the facts of your case. For harassment to amount to a meritorious claim, the employee must show that he or she was treated with incivility, unfairness or disrespect or that management's conduct was designed to cause the employee to leave. Not any form of perceived mistreatment will suffice: The conduct complained of must be such that no reasonable employee would be expected to persevere.

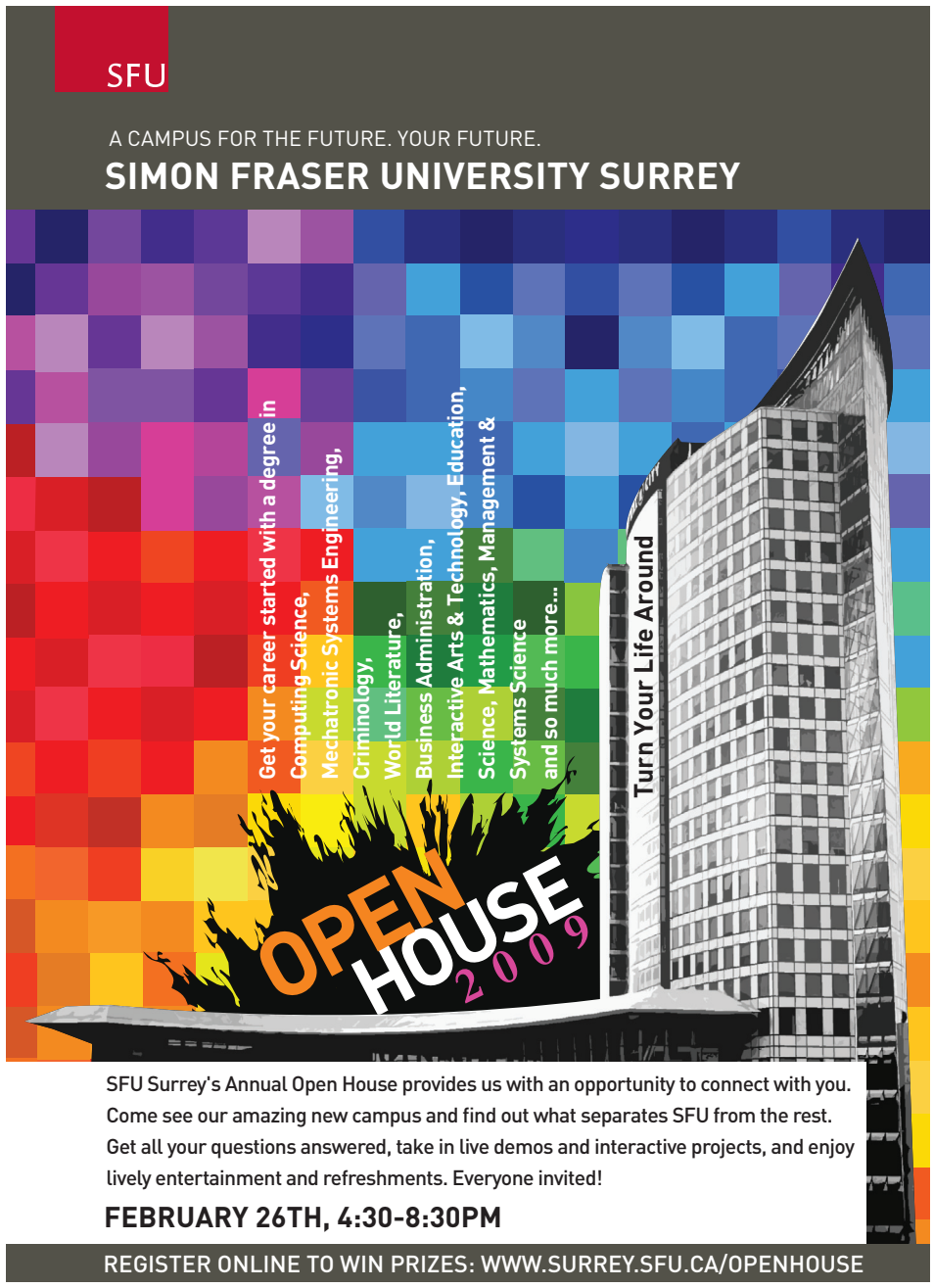
One might find it hard to know all the ins and outs of workplace law, so here are a few pointers.

CALCULATING SEVERANCE PAY: There is no rule of thumb. Seldom is severance pay based on arithmetic. Courts do not follow any defined rules in calculating how much severance to pay to a particular employee. Neither does your ex-employer. Rather, a judge's task is to consider all of the circumstances that either hinder or help a dismissed employee to find a new job. Four factors consistently prevail: Tenure, age, re-employability and the type of job being performed. Ask yourself how long it would reasonable take to find a comparable job and this is how much severance you should get.

EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS: Today, most of the workforce has a written employment contract. The result is that employees unknowingly agree to be eliminated with minimum severance, demoted, banished to far away jurisdictions, see their salary slashed, prevented from competition following their departure, and have promises broken at their employer's pleasure — all with legal impunity. Have a contract reviewed by legal counsel before signing off.

OFF DUTY BEHAVIOUR: Employees who believe that their conduct away from the office is immune from discipline are mistaken. Employers have the technological means — and occasionally the inclination — to monitor behaviour that occurs away from the job. And where off-duty behaviour poses a problem, don't be surprised when it follows you back to your desk.

Daniel A. Lublin is an employment lawyer focusing on the law of dismissal; dan@canadaemploymentlawyer.com.



Metro Drive

Maybach's new metal

Maybach has announced its Zeppelin will premiere at the Geneva Motor Show, Canadian Driver reports. It is a successor to the Maybach Zeppelin that was considered the ultimate in high-class automotive engineering in the 1930s. The flagship Zeppelin will feature a unique paint finish, meticulously crafted interior materials, and several new options including a perfume atomizer. METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: KUMAR SAHA, KUMAR.SAHA@METRONEWS.CA

Hot, hot Equator

Suzuki's light truck entry heavy with features

JIM KERR
for Metro Canada

There's a new player in the light truck market. Suzuki has expanded their lineup, not only adding compact cars and mid size SUV's, but now also have a mid-size truck in their portfolio. They call it the Equator.

Suzuki has built trucks before. Their first truck was the Suzulight Carry in 1961. We didn't see it here. Compared to other manufacturers, Suzuki is a relative newcomer to Canada, with Suzuki Canada Inc., founded in 1979 by parent company Suzuki Motor Corporation. To build a truck for North America, Suzuki has partnered with Nissan and will utilize Nissan's next generation Frontier platform for their first venture into the mid-size truck market.

According to Seiichi Maruyama, president of Suzuki Canada, "Pickup buyers in Canada are a particularly good fit for Suzuki since, statistically speaking, they're more likely to participate in lifestyle-oriented activities."

While U.S. buyers get the option of extended cab or crew cab, four cylinder or V6, manual or automatic transmission, the Equator in Canada is only available with the more versatile and popular crew cab configuration with V6 and automatic transmission. With 261 horsepower, the 4.0 litre V6 engine with a five speed automatic transmission provides ample power. Fuel economy is rated at 14.4 L/100 km in the city and 10.4 L/100 km on the highway, which is excellent for a vehicle with 281 ft lbs of torque and a towing capacity of 2767 kg.

For some serious off-road adventures, shift the standard two-speed transfer case into low range and let that four wheel drive system do the work. Stability control, traction control and ABS will help the driver both on and off road. A spray-in bedliner comes as standard equipment on every Equator and this tough low-slip surface will keep the interior of the box looking good no matter what you are hauling.

Inside, the Equator offers air conditioning, power windows and locks, keyless entry, cruise control, tilt steering, 60/40 split folding rear seats with underseat storage and security net over the storage area, rear window defroster and heated outside mirrors.

The interior looks attractive and access is very good, with the rear doors opening a full 90 degrees.

Mid-size trucks are gaining popularity for their fuel economy and economical pricing. There are limited choices in the mid-size truck market and Suzuki may be introducing the right vehicle at the right time. Recent Suzuki vehicles have been of excellent quality and the Equator's five year/100,000 km powertrain warranty will build confidence in the product. Capable of hauling passengers and cargo, towing a trailer or just playing around in the countryside, the Equator looks ready to go.

2009 Suzuki Equator

Type: 4WD mid-size pickup truck
Price: from $33,795
Engine: 4.0 litre DOHC V6
HP: 261 at 5600 rpm
Torque: 281 lb.ft. at 4000 rpm

Highlights

- Stability control
- Spray-on bed liner
- Rear window defroster
- Air conditioning

The 2009 Suzuki Equator is perfectly suited for Canadian outdoor and off-roading lifestyle, says Seiichi Maruyama, president of Suzuki Canada.

Capable of hauling passengers and cargo, towing a trailer or just playing around in the countryside, the Equator looks ready to go.

2010 Golf unveiled at show

DEBUT Volkswagen debuted the new 2010 Golf at the Canadian International Auto Show (CIAS) last week in Toronto.

The sixth generation compact hatchback was presented for the first time in North America in a five-door 2.0 litre TDI Diesel version.

One of the world's most popular vehicles ever, the Golf has sold over 26 million units since its introduction in Europe in 1974. Volkswagen also announced that nearly 400,000 Rabbits, Golfs, and GTIs have been sold in Canada since the introduction of the first generation in 1975.

The Golf's redesign team, headed by the Volkswagen Group's chief designer, Walter de Silva, with Klaus Bischoff and Flavio Manzoni, has succeeded in giving the Golf a presence, sharpness, and a power that generates even more fun.

All key body elements were redesigned, and the Golf has a sportier and more distinctive image.

In front, the new car adopts the radiator grille of the first generation Golf that is horizontally aligned between the headlights.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Boomers, you can always get what you want

AutoPilot

Michael Goetz
Veteran auto journalist

Those baby boomers always get their way. They got all that free love in the swinging '60s, jobs for life, real estate when it was cheap, and can actually get money out of the Canada Pension Plan. (Me bitter? No. I get to work until I'm 83. Why should I be bitter?)

And I don't know if you noticed, but the car market has also been at their beck and call. The market gave them cheap imports for their single years, created minivans for their family years, and concocted luxury SUVs so they would feel good about themselves in their peak earning years.

Now that they don't need minivans and SUVs, they're gravitating back to big, comfortable cars.

But get this — and this is so like them — they don't want their big comfortable cars to look like big comfortable cars, they want them to look sporty. When they're in these vehicles, they want to roll the window down, blast the stereo, and let the wind ruffle their hair-replacement transplants.

Vehicles catering to this demographic can be roughly described as large coupes, or sedans that look like coupes, and they have been popping up for a few years now. Consider the Mercedes-Benz CLS Class, Jaguar XF, Infiniti G37 (coupe and sedan), BMW 6 Series, Audi A5, Acura TL, and Pontiac G8.

The 2010 Hyundai Genesis sedan.

A quick tour around the Toronto auto show this week revealed even more new models in this mode. Witness the Passat CC, the new Hyundai 2010 Genesis coupe and sedan, the new Cadillac CTS, the new Lincoln MKZ, and the new Nissan Maxima. (Not at the show, but very emblematic of the trend, is Porsche's new "four-door" — the Panamera.)

Michael Pistol, a colleague who specializes in design, noted that these vehicles also tend not to be "too optimized." By that he means they're not about being organized to an inch of their lives, but have special aspects, in both the interior and exterior, that are there "just to look good." Pistol feels this is a backlash to some of the overly technical aspects of some high-end vehicles — which actually scare people.

He also noted that, if the driver's seat doesn't look like as comfortable as a La-Z-Boy, buyers wouldn't be interested.

I shouldn't be too hard on boomers. For one thing, I am one (at the tail end … always the worse end). For another, this class of vehicle is an entirely good and cool thing.

Michael Goetz has been writing about cars and editing automotive publications for more 20 years. He lives in Toronto with his family and a neglected 1967 Jaguar E-type.

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Trafalgar Tours has extended the booking period for its Buy One, Get One Free airfare deal with British Airways to March 31. The promotion covers travel from a variety of Canadian cities to many European gateways; see trafalgartours.ca for details. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Travel

Dublin guide

If you're thinking of heading to Dublin for St. Patrick's Day, check out visitdublin.com for a rundown of hotel deals, activities, maps and iWalks, free podcast audio guides to the city. You'll also find a link to the Dublin Pass, a savings package that covers free entry to 27 top attractions, free transport from Dublin Airport to the city and more. The site also boasts a handy countdown-to-St.-Patrick's-Day-2009 clock — and we're at 26 days now, so get planning. METRO NEWS SERVICES

TRAVELDESK@METRONEWS.CA

Rooms with a view

St. Lucia's newest upscale resorts boast panoramas so beautiful they've actually made grown men cry

REB STEVENSON
for Metro Canada

Jade Mountain resort in Soufriere, St. Lucia, doesn't have rooms — just "sanctuaries." And while that word may evoke serenity and calm, many guests experience the complete opposite when they enter their digs.

"People burst into tears," says Peter Jean Paul, assistant manager of the resort that opened less than two years ago. "I've seen them jump up and down uncontrollably ... And I'm talking about the men."

Standing in one of the "sanctuaries," such an outburst seems fitting. The four-poster bed, luxurious tub and panel of living ferns that grace the beautiful room are impressive. But they pale in comparison to what's not in the room: A fourth wall.

In its place is the hotel artwork to end all hotel artwork — an unobstructed vista of the Caribbean and the breathtaking twin Piton Mountains, while a basin of crystal clear water appears to cascade off the edge of the room.

It's an optical illusion created by the infinity pool in each of the resort's 24 sanctuaries.

This is the vision of Canadian architect/owner Nick Troubetzkoy, who sought to create a hovering platform where the terms "indoor" and "outdoor" no longer apply.

REB STEVENSON PHOTO

From the "sanctuaries" at the Jade Mountain resort in Soufriere, St. Lucia, guests have a spectacular view of the Caribbean and the island's breathtaking twin Piton Mountains.

To keep the vision unspoiled, reality — in the form of phones, TVs and radios — has been banished. One couple was so enchanted, they didn't come out of their room for five whole days.

"People get married in the rooms," says Jean Paul.

Lots of people are falling under St. Lucia's spell.

The island's tourism market is booming, and the proof is in the numbers: Today, there are 5,181 rooms on the island. By 2010, another 1,650 will have joined their ranks, with eight new resorts slated to open.

Bargain-basement all-inclusives they ain't.

The new resorts include high-rollers like Ritz-Carlton, Raffles and Westin, along with some uber-posh boutique hotels.

When it comes to St. Lucia's dramatic tropical landscape — thick rain forest and undulating roads that have your stomach whimpering for Gravol — hotel and golf course developers drool, says Tourism Minister Allen Chastanet.

And the dramatic topographical diversity attracts travellers bored with the sameness of typical Caribbean resorts.

"Beach vacations are great the first couple of times, but eventually people want to see more," says Chastanet. "Travel needs to be more than just relaxation, it has to be an experience."

REB STEVENSON PHOTO

Children play on a beach.

St. Lucia fills that bill. Those who are beach-bummed can frolic in a waterfall, slather on a layer of healing volcanic mud, zipline through the rain forest or bravely climb Gros Piton. The annual summer carnival welcomes tourists into its glittery embrace.

As of 2011, five new golf courses will round out the recreational offerings. And just who will be teeing off? Brits and Americans for the most part, but the tourist board anticipates a 23 per cent swell in Canadian visitors between now and 2010 — and this winter alone there will be a 40 per cent increase in flights to St. Lucia by Canadian carriers WestJet, Air Canada, Air Transat and Sunwing.

While budget-friendly options exist (word-of-mouth home-stays are plentiful; just ask a local and they'll probably refer you to their sister-in-law's back room), the wooing of well-heeled travellers is the order of the day.

"It's more expensive to fly here. The class we have to go after is middle-class and higher," says Chastanet.

At Cap Maison Resort and Spa, a cluster of 22 Spanish/Caribbean fusion villas on the northernmost point of St. Lucia, the slogan "for the privileged few" is unapologetically elitist.

"The feel is less of a hotel, more of a private home or a social house party," says general manager Ross Stevenson. We stroll through the nearly-completed complex. Leaning on the balcony at the outdoor restaurant, Stevenson gestures down at the crashing surf, where a large flat rock has captured his fancy. "It's going to be a deck, and we're going to put in a champagne zip-line, so people can wave a flag and have a bottle sent down," he says.

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Upward trend
Canadian travel to Florida increased by 14 per cent in 2008, according to VisitFlorida. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Exploring Mexico's myriad landscapes

ERICK TAPIA
Metro World News

High-profile beach resorts may be the first thing that comes to mind when Canadian holidaymakers think about Mexico. But that's a very narrow picture of a country that in fact boasts an astonishing variety of destinations.

Mexico is home to multiple ecosystems and an alluring geography that includes rainforests, deserts, beaches, magical old towns, forests, cliffs and spectacular vistas.

As for its cultural wealth, a mosaic of cultures left behind monuments, spiritual traditions and rituals that spark the imagination. In fact the country has so much to offer that the choice can be bewildering. Here's a rundown of some of Mexico's most exciting destinations:

Huatulco

A coastal paradise on the Pacific Ocean in the state of Oaxaca, Huatulco is the perfect spot for diving and snorkelling. The coastline has nine protected bays and 36 beaches, all part of the Bahias de Huatulco National Park.

Main tourist centres include Tangolunda Bay and Santa Cruz Bay; the latter has spectacular coral reefs teeming with marine life and hosts the annual Torneo de Pesca de Pez Vela (Sailfish Fishing Tournament) in April and May.

Tepoztlan

About two hours away from Mexico City, Tepoztlan is a place full of mystery and tradition. During the spring equinox, thousands of people visit the mountain of Cerro del Tepozteco because they believe it will charge them with energy. A highlight is the remains of a pre-Hispanic temple at the mountain's summit; tepoz.com.mx.

Teotihuacan

The place where men became gods, this is one of the most important archaeological zones in Mexico and a UNESCO World Heritage site.

The highlights of this metropolis — thought to have been built between the first and seventh centuries AD — are the Temple of Quetzalcoatl and the Pyramids of the Sun and the Moon, vast monuments flanking the central avenue. The site is 40 kilometres northeast of Mexico City.

Barrancas del Cobre

A national park located in the northwestern state of Chihuahua, Barrancas del Cobre or Copper Canyon is an enormous net of canyons four times the size of the Grand Canyon. It also has one of Mexico's most impressive arrays of flora and fauna.

The best way to explore this natural jewel is by train on the Chihuahua-Pacifico railroad or CHEPE, chepe.com.mx, which offers spectacular views of rivers, cactus forests, pine woodland and narrow gorges from above and below.

Stop off and you can enjoy trips downstream, horse riding, rock climbing, guided nature treks and visits to the reclusive Tarahumara Indians, barrancasdel cobrewebsite.com.

Valle de Bravo

About 150 kilometres southwest of Mexico City, on the hills rising from the shores of beautiful Lake Avandaro, this pretty little town is a magnet for tourists, many of whom are drawn by the Sanctuary for the Monarch Butterfly. Each winter, millions of Monarchs journey from North America to the local forest. Valle de Bravo is also home to the Velo de Novia (Bride's Veil) waterfall and the Natural Reserve of Monte Blanco; valledebravo.com.mx.

PURESTOCK

Tangolunda Bay in Huatalco is part of a coastal paradise of nine protected bays and 36 beaches.

On the web

- visitmexico.com

Real de Catorce

Real de Catorce is a beautiful, tranquil village high in the Sierra de Catorce mountains in the state of Zacatecas. Silence and pure air are its main attributes.

Founded in 1779, this once booming silver-mining town was later abandoned and many original buildings still stand, which is why it's a popular backdrop for Hollywood movies.

It's also a spiritual place, with pilgrims visiting every year for various festivals. Its tourist infrastructure is improving, but accommodation is limited.

There are no banks, and only one hotel and restaurant accepts credit cards; varealdecatorce.com.

'Recession chic' is the travel industry's newest buzz phrase

Riding the Recession

RECESSION Hedonism is out in the travel business and "recession chic" is in, according to experts at a recent travel show in New York where customers were looking for bargains to brighten the gloom.

"People are being more value conscious, but just as important, they're being more conscious of their values, and what that means is that they're looking for experiences that speak to their heart," said Daniel Levine, a trend spotter at the Avant-Guide Institute who analyzes social trends.

Levine says as Americans see their savings dwindle and the economy crumbling around them, they are focusing on what is most important — friends, family, health or the environment — and taking that into account in planning vacations. "It's not about hedonism any more," Levine said at the New York Times Travel Show in Manhattan.

"Destinations that are just offering expensive pampering are going to be hurting," he told Reuters. "The ones that are offering experiences that speak to 'recession chic' values are going to do well."

He pointed to a program set up by Ritz-Carlton hotels called Give Back Getaways, which gives guests at its luxury hotels an opportunity to spend half a day volunteering in the community where they are visiting.

Lydia Dean founded a company called GoPhilanthropic two years ago to design custom-tailored, high-end vacations that incorporate support for social and conservation projects in places such as Vietnam, India and Central America.

"In Vietnam, they're given an opportunity to purchase and donate a portable mobile library to a village that has no books," Dean said. "They get to deliver their book box, spend the afternoon with the children and really get to meet them."

The company is still in its early days, with just three staff planning around 10 to 20 customized trips a month that are priced around $2,500 to $3,500 US a person, but Dean said the market is growing. "That baby-boomer generation, they're very conscious. Many of them are seeing success and wealth beyond what they would ever have expected," Dean said. "When the economy gets back on its feet, I think we're really going to be overwhelmed."

"They will give up that Starbucks coffee every day as opposed to giving up that trip."
Jeff Duford

Jeff Duford, sales manager for G.A.P. Adventures which offers "responsible and sustainable" adventure travel in more than 100 countries, said there had been steady growth in the market for five years.

He said the kind of traveler who visits a developing country with G.A.P. was one who considered such travel a central part of their lifestyle, and was determined to go even in hard economic times. "They will give up that Starbucks coffee every day as opposed to giving up that trip."

One company seeking to ease the pain at a time of rising unemployment is Intrepid, an adventure travel firm that has come up with a special offer called Laid Off, Take Off, a 15 per cent discount for the newly unemployed.

The company's web site urges people to take advantage of a bad situation, saying: "When the going gets tough, the tough get travelling." REUTERS

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Australian bushfire appeal

G.A.P Adventures has launched an appeal to support Australian communities recently devastated by bushfires. Donations made through G.A.P's Planeterra Foundation will be matched dollar for dollar and go to the Australian Red Cross Society; visit planeterra.org. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

A paranormal pilgrimage in Transylvania

TheTravelJunkie

Those intrigued by things that go bump in the night can't help but take notice of Romania's most folkloric region. The very word Transylvania conjures up spooky gothic castles and blood-sucking aristocrats, but there's a lesser-known local attraction to add to your goose bump list.

The Hoia-Baciu Forest (HBF), located a few kilometres outside of the city of Cluj Napoca, is rumoured to be a hot bed of unexplained supernatural activity.

Dubbed the Bermuda Triangle of Transylvania, the forest first gained international attention in 1968, when biologist Alexandru Sift captured a photo of what's said to be a disc-shaped UFO.

Since then, UFOs, apparitions, abnormalities on photos, nocturnal lights and other unusual things have been regularly reported in the area.

Ghost hunters, paranormal investigators, parapsychologists — and more recently, tourists — have all taken an interest.

Of course, paranormal tourism isn't new. Sites including Roswell, N.M., Peru's Nazca lines and England's crop circles have drawn millions of tourists who want to believe.

But Dr. Adrian Patrut, a chemistry professor at the local university, claims that though there are many places around the world with unexplained phenomena, the "Hoia-Baciu Forest is one of the best due to the intensity, variety and complexity of its manifestations."

Patrut is president of the Romanian Society of Parapsychology and since the early '70s he has been studying occurrences in the forest such as unexplained splotches of light and luminescent orbs hovering in the sky.

He says that when you spend too much time in the HBF, you can experience symptoms such as anxiety, insomnia, excessive thirst, nausea, vomiting and headaches.

JULIA DIMON/FOR METRO CANADA

Adrian Patrut, a university chemistry professor, is president of the Romanian Society of Parapsychology. He's been studying occurrences in Transylvania's Hoia-Baciu Forest since the 1970s.

With that kind of build-up, I had to check out the forest for myself. A 20-minute drive outside of the city finds us on the fringes of the forest. Patrut and I climb up a steep grassy plain to get to the tree line. Once there, we get out our ghost hunting tools: A compass, a still camera, a video camera with infrared sensors and a Geiger counter to measure sudden rises in radiation. Then we head out into the forest in the hopes of seeing something strange.

The scene does look like something out of a Brothers Grimm fairy tale. Spiky branches reach out like bony fingers; trees are gnarled and spooky. Patrut claims that these trees were normal a few years ago. Now they are warped, "A clear sign of an apparition." Supernatural or not, there's something truly creepy about prowling an abandoned forest at night. A few hours of hunting left us with a bunch of mosquito bites but, sadly, no orbs or UFO sightings.

"We don't know what these apparitions are," says Patrut, "But we know what they are not. We believe they're not spirits, phantoms or extra terrestrials. They don't arrive from parallel worlds or from another time. They transcend the laws of normal physics. They are beyond what we know and can imagine."

For those keen to try their own paranormal pilgrimages, forget the Roswell and crop circle tourist traps. Grab your ghost hunting gear, reach out to Adrian Patrut and test your beliefs in Transylvania.

Julia Dimon is co-host of Word Travels, airing Sundays at 9:30 p.m. on OLN; juliadimon.com.

Word Travels

- Catch the second season of Word Travels, a documentary series that follows the real-life adventures of travel writers Julia Dimon and Robin Esrock. It airs Sundays at 9:30 p.m. on OLN.

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Birthday bash
Kristy Swanson and Lloyd Eisler, who tied the knot this month, threw another party over the weekend — son Magnus' two-year-old birthday bash. Guests gathered Sunday in L.A. for cupcakes and entertainment by The Jumpitz. **PEOPLE.COM**

Entertainment

Location, location

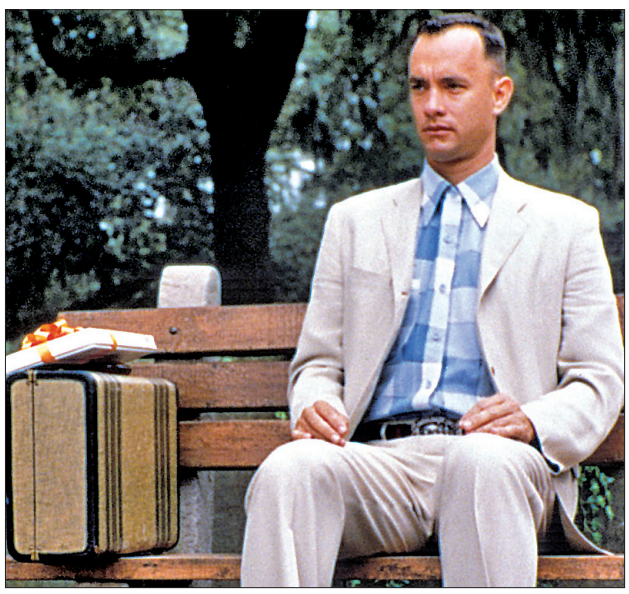
Cameron Diaz and British model Paul Sculfor are reportedly scouring the English countryside for the perfect place to tie the knot according to femalefirst.co.uk.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

Oscar's biggest blunders

PHIL BROWN
for Metro Canada



Alfred Hitchcock, left, is regarded as one of the finest directors of all time, but he never took home the Oscar for best director. Meanwhile, 1994 best picture winner Forrest Gump, right, is considered one of the worst representations of the mentally handicapped onscreen.

The 81st Annual Academy Awards

Like it or not the Oscars are coming on Sunday. The annual event might give Hollywood's biggest stars a chance to wear expensive clothing, but the awards should never be taken seriously as an accurate representation of the best films in any year.

The Academy is a very political beast and the decisions are rarely made for artistic merit. With that in mind, we present a list of Oscar's biggest blunders to help you curb your expectations for Sunday's extravaganza.

NO LOVE FOR HITCHCOCK OR KUBRICK: Stanley Kubrick and Alfred Hitchcock are universally regarded as two of the finest directors of all time, but not according to the Academy. Neither auteur took home a best director statue during their illustrious careers. The only time they were honoured was when Hitchcock got an apologetic career achievement award and Kubrick picked up a special effects statue for 2001. Mel Gibson does have a best director Oscar though. Apparently he's way better than those guys.

CITIZEN KANE IGNORED: Orson Welles' masterful debut is routinely labelled "the greatest film ever made," but it got snubbed on Oscar night in 1941. The Academy decided to honour John Ford's forgettable How Green Was My Valley instead. Welles went on to become a legend, but was never even nominated for a little gold dude again.

SCORSESE'S SNUB STREAK: Martin Scorsese may have finally gotten an Oscar for The Departed, but it was only after all of his best work was ignored. Scorsese had to see Taxi Driver lose best picture to Rocky and lose best director to Robert Redford and Kevin Costner before he finally got any recognition. The Academy is lucky that guy even showed up in 2007.

ART CARNEY'S BEST ACTOR WIN: Art Carney won the 1974 best actor statue for a movie in which he travelled the country with his cat. Now, that decision is offensive enough on its own, but it's even worse when you consider that he beat out Al Pacino for The Godfather Part II, Jack Nicholson for Chinatown, and Dustin Hoffman for Lenny. Those are three of the best actors of their generation giving three of their greatest performances. If he'd beaten even one of them it would have been a travesty. The fact that he beat them all is a tragedy.

FORREST GUMP BEATS PULP FICTION: In 1994 this decision seemed to make sense. Today, Pulp Fiction posters still fill dorm room walls and the only time Forrest Gump comes up is when the title is used as a punchline for a joke about the worst representation of the mentally handicapped onscreen. Smooth move Academy.

Party planners say festivities have slowed ahead of big show

Whether it's the recession, the age of Obama or the fact a hopeful movie is favoured to win best film at Sunday's Oscars, it's clear that change has come to Hollywood.

Movie fans and critics have escaped the gloomy economy by seeking out Academy Award front-runner Slumdog Millionaire, a rags-to-riches romance about a poor, young Indian man on an odds-defying quest on a television game show.

Slumdog follows two straight years of dark crime dramas — No Country for Old Men and The Departed — winning the world's top film honour, the Oscar, for best motion picture.

Party planners and caterers say plans for Oscar festivities have slowed ahead of the Oscar show. Celebrity gift-getting suites are open for business but organizers say giving back seems to be more of a priority among the stars.

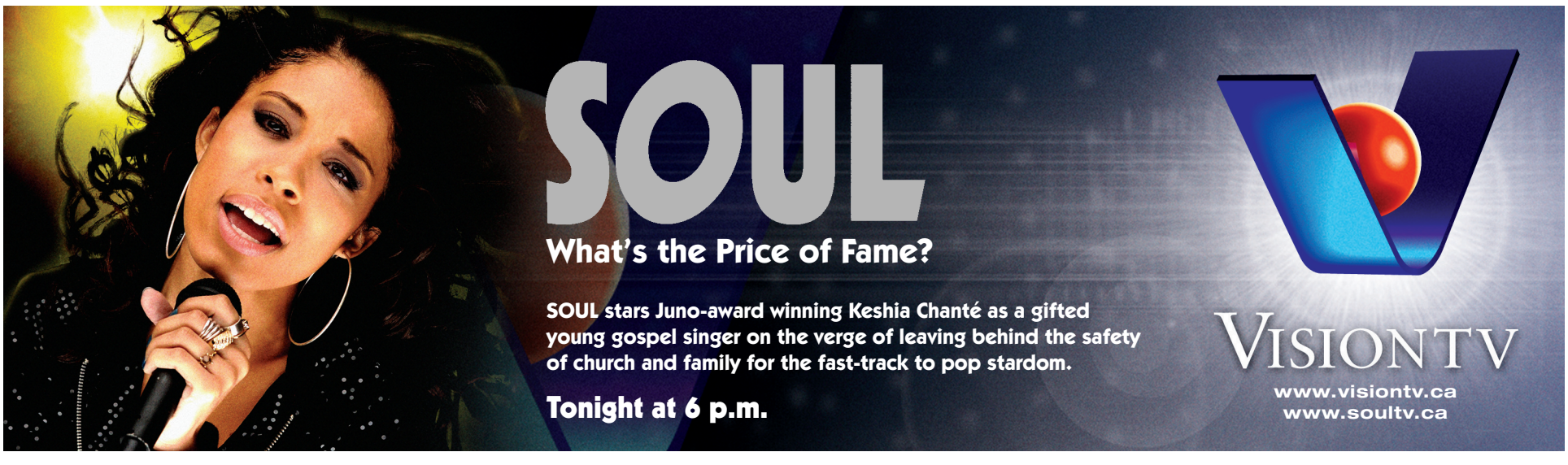
"A lot of the glamour associated with the Oscars is still there but it's tempered by the economic times." Leeza Gibbons

"Obama asked us for a day of service and we're asking for a night to make a difference," celebrity talk show hostess Leeza Gibbons said.

Gibbons and singer Olivia Newton-John's are hosting an Oscar night benefit for Gibbons' Memory Foundation and Newton-John's Cancer and Wellness Centre. "A lot of the glamour associated with the Oscars is still there but it's tempered by the economic times," Gibbons said.

Vanity Fair, which once ruled the roost, will renew its annual gala but the affair will be toned down compared to previous years.

Elton John and David Furnish are hosting their annual charity event but gone are last year's competing private affairs by pop stars Madonna and Prince. In their place, Hollywood's elite may be rolling over to a Mercedes-Benz-sponsored party. **REUTERS**



Jackson sale

Michael Jackson is reportedly selling personal items including his famous jewelled white glove and a robotic head. The pop icon is holding a five-day public auction at the Beverly Hilton hotel in Los Angeles in April. **FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK**

Designer flops in fashion flashback

RAFAEL BRUSILOW
for Metro Canada

Last night's Project Runway Canada episode proved that if you want to be a clothing designer, it pays to know the fashion world's history.

The designers were put in teams of three and asked to create a couture mini-collection inspired by the design spirit of an iconic fashion brand. The first two groups picked Valentino and Versace while Barrie, Ont. designer Brandon R. Dwyer's group chose Yves Saint Laurent, a French designer considered one of the 20th century's most influential figures in fashion for his gender-bending, innovative outfits.

"As soon as I got home I checked out all (Yves Saint Laurent's) collections. He's someone who made a huge impact in the fashion industry."
Brandon R. Dwyer, Project Runway contestant

Dwyer, 23, quickly told his group he had no idea who Laurent was, starting a downward spiral that culminated in show host Iman telling Dwyer that his frilly shirt and deliberately mismatched pants "desecrated Mr. Saint Laurent."

Panel judge and Elle Canada editor-in-chief Rita Silvan chose slightly more diplomatic words.

"If you don't know much about Yves Saint Laurent, how can you be a fashion designer?" Silvan asked.

With that Dwyer was sent home and he still strongly believes the faux pas was the main reason he got cut.

"I think not knowing YSL was a huge factor because Iman had a huge spaz when I mentioned it. I felt there were garments that were a lot weaker than mine," Dwyer said.

Since leaving the show, Dwyer has taken some time to read up on the legendary designer.

Barrie, Ont., designer Brandon R. Dwyer was sent home from Project Runway Canada last night.

"As soon as I got home I checked out all his collections. He's someone who made a huge impact in the fashion industry," Dwyer said.

Trying to design an outfit in the style of a designer he'd never heard of before was definitely challenging for Dwyer. "It was hard to concentrate on the actual garment, so that made the challenge really difficult," he said.

Now that Dwyer is off the show he'll focus on his eponymous clothing line — Brandon R Dwyer — and go back to making the types of clothes he likes design. "The stuff I did for the show is not necessarily anything I'd do in real life. My stuff is very avant-garde," Dwyer said.

When to watch

- Project Runway Canada airs Tuesday nights on Global.

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Photo of Meg Roe by David Cooper

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Suge Knight injured in hotel fracas

PEOPLE Rap music mogul Marion (Suge) Knight was treated in the hospital for facial injuries after being injured in a fight at a local hotel, Scottsdale police said Monday.

Suge Knight

Security at the W hotel in the city near Phoenix called police after two groups of guests exchanged "heated words in the VIP area" early Monday, Scottsdale police said in a news release.

Shortly after police officers arrived at the hotel, they saw a man punch Knight, 43, twice in the head, police said.

Officers used Taser stun guns to break up the fracas and arrested two men — identified as Robert Carnes and Leon Anderson — who were subsequently charged with aggravated assault and disorderly conduct, the police report added.

Knight, co-founder of the rap label Death Row Records, was taken to a local hospital where he was treated for facial injuries, police said. **REUTERS**

Timberlake and Biel moving to the city

Looks like Justin Timberlake and girlfriend Jessica Biel will be full-time residents of New York City soon. The pair, who were spotted apartment-hunting back in September, have reportedly settled on a lovely $2.9-million US Chelsea duplex, according to Us Weekly. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Lost and Idol do TV battle Wednesday

The Fox network is shaking up Wednesday night by swapping reality hit American Idol and the new police procedural Lie to Me.

Once the singing competition moves into the finals March 11, Fox will pivot Idol to 9 p.m. EST, turning its ratings Death Star against ABC's Lost for the rest of season.

The Tim Roth-starring Lie to Me will stay out of the way by shifting to 8 p.m.

Though Idol and Lost tend to have different audiences, last week Fox aired a two-hour Idol that stretched into the 9 p.m. hour and seemed to take a little steam out of the mystery thriller, whose ratings have fallen with each episode this season.

For Lie, the move is is a mixed blessing. The drama won't have nearly as much competition at 8 p.m. Wednesday, but it won't have Idol for a lead-in either.

This is the first time in two years that Lost has faced Idol. REUTERS

GlobalStyle

Kenya Hunt

Read the latest fashion news, including New York Fashion Week highlights, at metronews.ca/globalstyle

Entertainment in brief

TELEVISION AMC and Sony have launched online minisodes for the Emmy-winning series Breaking Bad to promote the show's upcoming second-season premiere. The five-minute stand-alone shorts will feature the show's regular cast, and began debuting yesterday on AMC's site and crackle.com. The minisodes are one of three digital extensions for the drama, which returns March 8.

NEWS Longtime ABC News correspondent Sam Donaldson is easing quietly into part-time work. The 74-year-old journalist, who was the network's chief White House correspondent from 1977 to 1989, is leaving full-time work later this month. Donaldson, who says he's not retiring but "cutting back," told the Washington Post that he didn't ask for a new contract when his last one was due for renewal late last year. REUTERS

VA	Vu	SC	C		7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
primetime 2/18/09	251	308	3	CBC	Coronation St.	Jeopardy! (N)	The Week the Women Went		Being Erica (N) (CC) (DVS)		CBC News: The National (N)		(:05) The Hour
	255	358	6	JOY	E! News	The Insider	Knight Rider (N) (CC)		Party Monsters: Cabo (CC)		Carmen Electra: THS		News (N)
	254	-	8	M	Two-Half Men	Two/Half Men	Omni News: Mandarin Edition		News: Cantonese Edition		Omni News: Punjabi Edition		Metropia
	250	321	9	CTV	etalk (CC)	Hollywood	American Idol (Live) (CC)		Criminal Minds (CC)		CSI: NY "The Party's Over"		News (N)
	-	-	10	OMNI	The Daily	Frasier (CC)	Stargate SG-1 "Prisoners"		Third Watch (CC)		Scrubs (CC)	Buddhism	New Day
	252	336	11	GTV	Entertainment	ET Canada	Lie to Me "Love Always" (N)		Bones (N) (PA) (CC)		(:02) Life on Mars (N) (CC)		News (N)
	256	389	12	VI	Instant Star	TMZ (N) (CC)	Lost "This Place Is Death"		Lost "316" (N) (CC)		Law & Order "Rapture" (N)		News (CC)
	253	359	13	CITY	Law & Order: SVU		13: Fear Is Real "Alone"		Hates Chris	Friends (CC)	I Love Money (CC)		EP Daily
	-	-	14	CW	Deal-No Deal	Deal-No Deal	Privileged (CC)		90210 (CC)		Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Frasier (CC)
	289	381	15	CBS	Entertainment	The Insider	Old Christine	Gary Unmarr	Criminal Minds (N) (CC)		CSI: NY "The Party's Over"		News (N)
	287	379	16	NBC	Evening Mag.	Inside Edition	Knight Rider (CC)		Life "I Heart Mom" (N) (CC)		Law & Order "Rapture" (N)		News (N)
	602	568	19	W	Will & Grace	Friends (CC)	Grocery	Grocery	How Clean	How Clean	Maxed Out (N)	Maxed Out	Maxed Out
	288	380	21	ABC	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Lost "This Place Is Death"		Lost "316" (N) (CC)		(:02) Life on Mars (N) (CC)		KOMO 4 News
	-	-	23	KVOS	M*A*S*H	Seinfeld	National Lampoon's Vacation ★★ (1983) Chevy Chase.				King	Still Standing	Scrubs (CC)
	291	383	27	PBS	Steves Europe	Travels-Edge	An Evening With Eartha Kitt		American Masters (N) (CC)				MI-5 (CC)
	290	382	28	FOX	Two-Half Men	Two/Half Men	American Idol (CC)		Lie to Me "Love Always" (N)		News (N) (CC)		Family Guy
	-	364	43	PBS	(6:00) American Masters (N)		Keeping Up	Being Served	Tavis Smiley	Charlie Rose (N) (CC)		African American Lives 2	
	296	654	64	SBK	Frasier (CC)	Frasier (CC)	Punk'd (CC)	South Park	Cheers (CC)	Half & Half	The Insider	Entertainment	Perfect Pullup
	298	653	65	TLA	Two-Half Men	Two/Half Men	Privileged (CC)		90210 (CC)		KTLA Prime News (CC)		Friends (CC)
	295	651	66	WGN	WGN News at Nine (N) (CC)		Family Guy	Two/Half Men	According-Jim	Sex and-City	Friends (CC)	Friends (CC)	My Wife-Kids
	297	652	67	WPX	PIX News at Ten Tong. (N)		Two/Half Men	Friends (CC)	Sex and-City	According-Jim	Red C	Frasier (CC)	Odd Couple
	199	311	76	STR	News (N)	News		Late Show-Letterman		Late Late Show		Will & Grace	Seinfeld
news	502	390	26	NW	Animal Takeover (N) (CC)		CBC News: The National (N)		CBC News: The National		Animal Takeover (CC)		National
	500	500	33	CNN	Anderson Cooper 360 (CC)				Larry King Live		Anderson Cooper 360 (CC)		Cooper 360
sports	407	419	22	RSP	WHL Hockey Saskatoon Blades at Calgary Hitmen. (Same-day Tape)						Sportsnet Connected (Live)		Sportsnet
	400	400	30	TSN	SportsCentre (Live) (CC)			Off the Record	Winter X Games (CC)		Winter X Games (Taped)		SportsCentre
	411	457	49	OLN	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Survivorman (CC)		Mantracker	Mantracker	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Survivorman
	410	403	54	SCR	Score Tonight		Hardcore Hockey Talk		Final Score	Final Score	Final Score	Final Score	Final Score
	417	406	55	SC	Drag Race	Wrecked	Pimp My Ride	Pass Time	Pinks Out	Pinks Out	Pinks	Pinks	Drag Race
	416	409	144	GLF	Legends	Footballers	Gol TV News	Samba	Foot Brazil	Gol TV News	Paid Program	Gol TV News	Gol TV News
family	552	543	25	YTV	Prank Patrol	Prank Patrol	Malcolm-Mid.	Futurama	Adrenaline	Prank Patrol	Falcon Beach "Starting Over"		Mystery Hnt.
	555	545	50	TEL	Totally Spies	Total Drama	6TEEN	6TEEN	Futurama	American Dad	Chicken	Father	Moral Orel
	557	541	51	FAM	Wizards-Place	Han. Montana	Zack & Cody	Latest Buzz	Wizards-Place	Life Derek	Ned's School	Cory in House	Zack & Cody
	553	546	56	TRE	Comfy Couch	Rolie Polie	Max & Ruby	Babar (CC)	Backyard	Dora-Explorer	Go, Diego, Go!	Franklin	Comfy Couch
cable variety	268	354	5	KNO	Canadian Waterways (CC)		Man Made Marvels (CC)		Suzie LeBlanc Musical Quest		Suzie LeBlanc: Man-Quantz		Montreal Jazz
	575	583	20	CMT	Hope & Faith	Hope & Faith	Three Chords	Tara Diaries	Home Imp.	Home Imp.	Reba (CC)	Reba (CC)	Hope & Faith
	570	580	24	MM	Video on Trial	Video on Trial	PunchMuch		America's Best Dance Crew		MuchTopTens (CC)		Spotlight Pink.
	600	564	29	H&G	Hid Potential	Really Big Flip	Holmes on Homes (CC)		Property	Unsellable	Mansions	Property Shop	Hid Potential
	615	520	31	A&E	Bounty Hunter	Exterminators	Exterminators	Exterminators	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter
	628	584	32	SPKE	UFC's Ultimate Fight Night		Ways to Die	EA Gillette	CSI: NY "On the Job" (CC)		Disorderly Conduct: Video		Videos
	521	560	34	TLC	Mystery Diagnosis (CC)		My Shocking Story (CC)		Incredibly Small		Mystery Diagnosis (CC)		Untold Stories
	616	522	39	SHO	The Outer Limits (CC)		About a Girl	About a Girl	The Guard (CC)		Big Love (N) (CC)		House (CC)
	620	523	40	BVO	Opera	Broadway	Law & Order "Oxymoron"		Without a Trace "Patient X"		Beautiful People ★★★ (1999, Drama) (CC)		
	601	562	41	SLC	Kimora: Fab	Kardashians	ET Canada	Matchmaker	Chop Shop	Mr. Friday	Trading Spouses		Biggest Loser
	520	505	42	DIS	Mayday "Ghost Plane" (CC)		Daily Planet (CC)		MythBusters (CC)		Austin Stevens Adventures		Mayday (CC)
	522	506	44	HIS	NCIS "The Curse" (CC)		Cities of the Underworld		Museum Mysteries-World		NCIS "The Curse" (CC)		Inventions
	627	528	45	SPC	Rabbit Fall	Rabbit Fall	Stargate SG-1 "Crystal Skull"		Star Trek: Next Gener.		Star Trek: Voyager (CC)		Star Trek: Ent.
	294	650	47	TBS	House-Payne	House-Payne	Seinfeld	10 Items-Less	Sex and-City	Sex and-City	Guess Who ★★ (2005) Bernie Mac. (CC)		
	619	525	48	TROP	Reality	Ad Persuasion	Family Guy	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Raymond	Family Guy	Married... With	Seinfeld
	603	561	52	FN	Top Chef Final challenges. (Part 1 of 2) (CC)			Dinner	Challenge Sandwiches. (CC)		Iron Chef America		Top Chef
	626	547	57	COM	Air Farce	Just for Laughs (CC)		Corner Gas	The Simpsons	South Park	Jon Dore	Martin	Daily Show
	320	621	60	CEN	(6:00) Away From Her ★★★		Paranoid Park ★★★ (2007) Gabe Nevins.			Doomsday ★★	(2008) Rhona Mitra, Malcolm McDowell. (CC)		
	581	566	101	MTV	The Real World "Brooklyn"		MTV Live	After	From G's to Gents Dressing.		The Real World "Brooklyn"		MTV Live
	261	394	102	V	Tuscany		Poltergeist: The Legacy		Great Scout and Cathouse Thursday ★★★ (1976) (CC)				Paid Program
	-	-	109	MUL	Eight Heroes	Mom's-Upset	Van. Nights	Iranian Pop	Sabor Latino		Sabor Musical	Travel TV	Patrol World

critics' corner

Corner Gas

"Mandelbaum! Mandelbaum!" Oops, sorry, that was "Seinfeld." But "Physical Credit" may put you in mind of the time an elderly fitness trainer went to work on Jerry. In this case, it's Oscar (Eric Peterson), who makes Davis (Lorne Cardinal) his fitness protege. Wanda (Nancy Robertson) is miffed when Hank (Fred Ewanuick) is approved for a credit card she can't get. Brent and Lacey (Brent Butt, Gabrielle Miller) compete over a secret. 4 PM on COM

Knight Rider

They say you can't go home again, and that's especially true if by "home" you mean "old bar you used to hang out at when you were younger." Mike (Justin Bruening) decides to visit one of his old haunts, Sonny's Bar, and finds it's changed for the worse. It seems Sonny was killed in a car accident, and his daughter (Alona Tal) is now running the place. Mike offers to help out in order to return it to its former glory, but someone's got other plans. 8 PM on JOY NBC

Roseanne rips on Chris Brown

Roseanne Barr has taken to her blog to comment on Chris Brown's alleged assault of girlfriend Rihanna, saying his "lies and excuses" sound "just like every sleazy bastard who ever smacked his wife, kid, mother or girlfriend." METRO NEWS SERVICES

Celebrity Buzz

Madonna brainwashing my son: Model's mother

PEOPLE Not only is Madonna, 50, old enough to be boy-toy Jesus Luz's mother, she's old enough to be the 22-year-old's grandmother, wonderwall.com reports.

The New York Post reports that Luz already has a grandma, and she is around 50 years old, too. Meanwhile, Luz's mom, Cristiane Regina da Silva, a hairdresser in Brazil, is apparently 14 years younger than Madonna and believes the pop icon has kidnapped and brainwashed her son.

Luz's whole family (and trail of ex-girlfriends) back in Brazil are apparently upset he spent Christmas in the Maldives with Madge, and the Brazilian media are claiming that her PR people confiscated his cellphone. Apparently the Luz clan, all devout Christians, are worried that Jesus will be lured into Kabbalah. He's already dropped the 40 Graus Modelos modeling agency back in his homeland to join Ford Models in New York, if that's any indication of his burgeoning commitment to Madonna, the website adds.

GETTY IMAGES PHOTOS

METRO NEWS SERVICES

No romance, Katy says

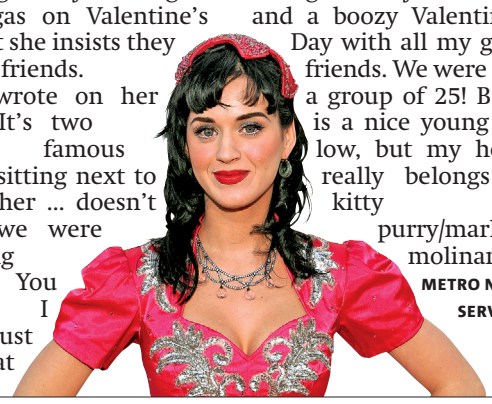
RUMOUR Katy Perry has denied that she is seeing Benji Madden, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The singer sparked rumours she was dating the Good Charlotte rocker when they were spotted enjoying a cozy evening in Las Vegas on Valentine's Day, but she insists they are just friends.

She wrote on her blog: "It's two pseudo famous people sitting next to each other ... doesn't mean we were bumping uglies. You know I don't just do that with anyone."

The 24-year-old singer explained she was celebrating the romantic day with a group of friends.

Admitting she only has time for her pet cat, she wrote: "I was there celebrating a really fun show and a boozy Valentine's Day with all my good friends. We were like a group of 25! Benji is a nice young fellow, but my heart really belongs to kitty purry/markus molinari."



METRO NEWS SERVICES

Motherhood a time-thief: Julia

FAMILY As a full-time stay-at-home mom for the past year, Julia Roberts says life outside the Hollywood spotlight has been anything but uneventful — thanks to her three kids with husband Danny Moder, people.com reports.

"Danny and I talk about, 'What did we do with all the time we must have had?'" she tells Allure in its March issue. "Because you don't recognize it as such, until you have all these little ... time thieves running around your house."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Leave Jessica alone: Jennifer

PEOPLE Jennifer Love Hewitt wishes people would stop debating Jessica Simpson's weight, usmagazine.com reports.

"I wish they would leave her alone," she said.

Her message to Simpson? "Ignore it, live your life and be happy."

Hewitt — who was famously mocked in 2007 when photos surfaced of her curvy figure in a bikini — told Us she is tired of the "unreasonable" Hollywood standards when it comes to weight.

"We're all supposed to look how we're supposed to look. We're made to be different people."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Lindsay talks Big Macs and weight rumours

PEOPLE Lindsay Lohan insists she loves Big Macs, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The actress has sparked concerns for her health after being pictured with an increasingly skinny frame, but has blamed her slim physique on her hectic work schedule.

"I eat. I had my Big Mac yesterday from McDonald's. I eat just as much as I always have," the website quotes her as saying. "I think I've just been working a lot. It's just down to stress and lack of sleep when I travel. I think it's all that stuff that adds up."

The 22-year-old star won't listen to criticism about her weight, adding she doesn't want to be pressured into looking a certain way.

"I'm my own person, and people can say whatever they want. I'm still going to be the person that I am, and I think that's so important for people in Hollywood."

Lohan added she only cares about being happy and has learned to accept herself the way she is: "I think that I don't ever want to pretend to be something that I'm not. I'm not perfect, nobody is perfect."

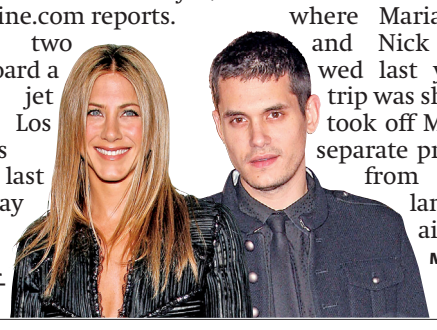
METRO NEWS SERVICES

Jen and John's V-Day trip

RELATIONSHIP Jennifer Aniston and John Mayer celebrated Valentine's Day with a trip to the Bahamas, usmagazine.com reports. The vacation was a present from Mayer, x17online.com reports.

The two left aboard a private jet from Los Angeles late last Thursday night — a day after Aniston's 40th birthday — and arrived on the island of Eleuthera the next morning, according to x17.

They stayed in a gated, luxurious home on the north of the island — where Mariah Carey and Nick Cannon wed last year. The trip was short: Both took off Monday in separate private jets from the island's main airport.



METRO NEWS SERVICES

Klum shrugs off 'fat' comment

CRITICISM While taking a break from New York Fashion Week, supermodel Heidi Klum addressed the hubbub over designer Wolfgang Joop calling her fat. "It's a life where everyone can say what they want to say and everyone can have their opinion — that is his," she said, according to In Touch. "In this business you have to be fit, but I always try to be a good role model and not too thin."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Josh and Fergie on honeymoon No. 2?

MARRIAGE Less than one month after their tropical getaway to the Maldives, Josh Duhamel and Fergie jetted off to the Mayan Riviera in Mexico for another romantic vacation last weekend, this time to attend the wedding of a friend, people.com reports.

As if on a second honeymoon, a source said the couple enjoyed "lots of outdoor activities, including sunbathing, snorkling, visiting the lowland rainforest and several historic Maya sites."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

The Weather Network
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Today Partly cloudy 9°/ 0°

Thursday Mainly sunny 8° / 1°

Friday Sunny 8° / 3°

The Weather Network
BEAT THE COLD & FLU SEASON
Your Cold & Flu Report is available at theweathernetwork.com

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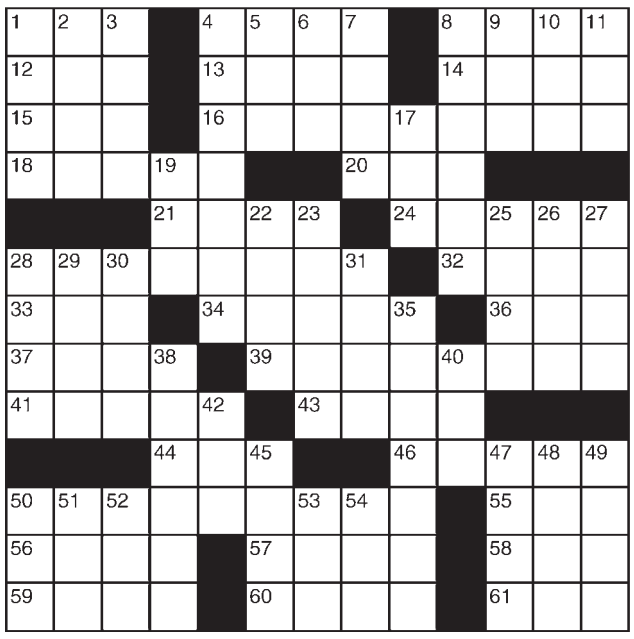
Take Five



Crossword across

1 Lawyers' org.
4 Bob or Elizabeth
8 Lather
12 Pistol
13 "Metamorphoses" poet
14 Contemporary coin
15 "Guinness Book" suffix
16 Quarantine facility
18 Filch
20 Unruly group
21 Apprehends
24 Redden
28 Jesus' home
32 Birthright barterer
33 "— Got a Secret"
34 Knapsack part
36 Prior night
37 Collections
39 Risked
41 Baghdad resident
43 Make (one's way)
44 Multi-purpose truck
46 Refuge
50 Mideast region
55 Sapporo sash
56 Culture medium
57 — and void
58 Suitable
59 Info
60 With skill
61 Fool

Crossword down

1 Forever, it seems
2 Bankrupt
3 Initial stake
4 Moolah
5 Eggs
6 Claiborne of fashion
7 Dutch cheese
8 Weak
9 No longer chic
10 Illustrations
11 Cattle call
17 Lowe or Morrow
19 Santa —, Calif.
22 "Little Women" woman
23 Milkshake insert
25 Secondhand
26 Rescue
27 Coloured
28 Unless (Latin)
29 State with certainty
30 Catherine — -Jones
31 Visibility hindrance
35 Magnificent array
38 Uncool
40 Vitamin amt.
42 "— Impossible"
45 Italian volcano
47 Parlor piece
48 Wading bird
49 Perches
50 Wander about
51 Past
52 Use a ray-gun
53 Massage
54 Under the weather

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

		9		8			5	
						9		
5	1	2	6	7				4
4		8	3			2		
				2				
		3			6	1		7
9				5	7	3	4	6
		5						
	2			3		5		

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

G	A	F	F	■	S	T	A	B	■	G	O	D
O	L	I	O	■	A	R	I	A	■	I	R	E
T	A	X	R	E	T	U	R	N	■	L	E	E
■	■	■	K	N	E	E	■	T	U	T	O	R
S	I	R	E	D	■	■	E	A	S	E	■	■
H	O	E	D	■	F	A	X	M	O	D	E	M
E	W	E	■	F	A	R	I	S	■	G	P	A
M	A	X	E	R	N	S	T	■	B	E	E	N
■	■	A	L	E	S	■	■	O	L	D	E	N
G	I	M	M	E	■	A	O	N	E	■	■	■
A	N	I	■	W	A	X	P	O	E	T	I	C
T	O	N	■	A	R	E	A	■	P	A	P	A
E	N	E	■	Y	E	L	L	■	S	P	O	T

5	9	7	8	3	6	1	2	4
6	3	2	1	4	9	5	8	7
8	4	1	2	5	7	6	3	9
7	8	6	5	2	1	9	4	3
2	1	3	9	6	4	7	5	8
4	5	9	7	8	3	2	6	1
3	7	4	6	1	2	8	9	5
1	6	8	3	9	5	4	7	2
9	2	5	4	7	8	3	1	6

Find today's answers + play more games at metronews.ca

SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:
Under 13 min .....Genius
13-17 min.....Scholar
17-21 min .....Smart
21-25 min .....Not bad
25+ min.....Keep practising

Metro Recipe of the Day

Fusilli and Meatballs

INGREDIENTS:
1 large onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced
796-ml can no-salt-added Italian tomatoes
796-ml can no-salt-added whole tomatoes in purée
1/4 cup (50 ml) chopped fresh basil
1 tbsp (15 ml) fresh oregano or 1 tsp (5 ml) dried
2 slices firm-textured white bread
1 lb (500 g) lean (93%) ground beef
1 large egg
2 tbsp (25 ml) reduced-fat milk (2%)
1/2 tsp (2 ml) salt
1/2 tsp (2 ml) black pepper
12 oz (375 g) long fusilli

METHOD:
1. Coat large pot with non-stick cooking spray and set over medium-high heat. Sauté onion and garlic until soft, about 5 minutes. Transfer 2 tbsp (25 ml) onion mixture to large bowl.
2. Process Italian and whole tomatoes in food processor until fairly smooth. Add to pot. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low. Cover and simmer, stirring often, 30 minutes. Add basil and oregano during the last 15 minutes.
3. Process bread until crumbs form. Add crumbs, beef, egg, milk, salt, and black pepper to onion mixture and mix just until blended. Shape into twenty 1-in. (2.5-cm) meatballs. Coat medium skillet with nonstick cooking spray and set over medium-high heat. Cook meatballs in batches until browned on all sides, about 8 minutes.
4. Drain on paper towels. Add meatballs to sauce. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, 20 minutes.
5. Meanwhile, cook pasta according to package directions. Drain and toss with 1 1/2 cups sauce in large heated serving bowl. Spoon 1 cup (250 ml) sauce over pasta. Serve meatballs and remaining sauce alongside.

SERVES 6

rd.ca
For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to **rd.ca** or check out **Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!**

Horoscopes

AVATAR VENUS

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
Someone with a hidden agenda speaks of the future. Don't let your hot-headedness go beyond good taste. A wonderful transformation is coming.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
Don't let pride stand in the way of understanding. Difficulties that flare can be resolved with care. Maintain a flexible attitude in groups.

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
Concentrate on a business that has good chances. Don't take on any risks. Before leaving a difficult situation, take stock of the benefits.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
A friend leaves an unhappy marriage. Profits gained through unethical dealings melt away. A nitpicker learns from other people's heated reactions.

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
Stash your belongings in safe place. You'll be frustrated when you're forced to confront a noisy bore. Show compassion before casting blame.

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
While seeking information, you'll have to give directions. Pretending that you don't care won't work. You'll avoid the mess of impulsive deeds.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
Encourage a meddler to be more sincere. A private fantasy will become more exhilarating. An interesting man takes pleasure in your company.

SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
Someone's laziness will enrage a female. Teach others to face trouble as it comes up. Someone will love you when they know you better.

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
Find time to have fun with the people you love. A chat will clear the air. An untrustworthy person is acting on your behalf.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
A woman wants more kindness than you can give. Express your feelings with passion. A surprising shift will take place within your family.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
A friendship develops for very complicated reasons. Hints of your future power in a relationship will come. Someone returns early from a trip.

PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
Someone's honour will please you. A disappointment affects your chance to succeed. A dramatic spat shouldn't be allowed to get worse.

WORDY GURDY®

BY TRICKY RICKY KANE

Every answer is a rhyming pair of words (like FAT CAT and DOUBLE TROUBLE), and they will fit in the letter squares. The number after the definition tells you how many syllables in each word.

1. Flattens Henry Higgins player Harrison (1)
2. Hide away a pane holder or an obi (1)
3. Monetarily punish designer Calvin (1)
4. Above a patch of shamrocks (2)
5. Singer Beyoncé tosses the dice (1)
6. One who weds a cross-country runner (3)
7. Approaching an opening in the woods (2)

ANSWERS
1. DECKS REX 2. STASH SASH 3. FINE KLEIN 4. OVER CLOVER 5. KNOWLES ROLLS 6. HARRIER MARRIER 7. NEARING CLEARING

2-18-09

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